

sag rag

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 4

SHASTA AREA GROTTO NEWSLETTER

JULY-AUG 1998



Liz Wolff teaches a Cave Survey Class at the SAG Cave Camp last June.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Grandpa Wolff is getting older.

Modoc County gets another cave surveyed.

SOG LOG makes another appearance, with
Scorpion and ORCA articles.

And please don't feed the mountain lions.

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.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER: Old Age – A “new” stage of life for this caver
By Jim Wolff

I am getting older, I finally convinced myself, and must admit that although I once was able to spend a twelve hour trip into Bigfoot Cave, back in some remote section of the cave, and get real cold and lapse into second stage hypothermia, I can't do things like that anymore, even if I wanted to!! Now, I must settle for a one to three hour trip into the average cave up there, and in relative comfort . . . Of course, I've had the privilege recently to mentor a new caver this last season. Getting old gracefully is hard for me, and letting go of unrealistic dreams and settling for things that I can still do is even harder. Things like mentoring new cavers. We have some new cavers in our grotto that need to be directed on the right path in getting geared up and trained up. Can anybody else take this responsibility as well . . . ?

So, now realizing one of my new roles in caving, I guess I'll share some of my speleo-wisdom and challenges with you, my fellow cavers.

I once also was able to spend a short weekend of three days, where the drive, the hike up to set up camp and get all rested and geared up, would mean I could be caving within 6 hours of home. Now-a-days though, it would take me well over three and a half hours on the trail from the trailhead to the camp. Of course, I must admit that I'm carrying more now too (I used to keep most of my stuff in the grain bin), but I don't think that that's an excuse, I'm just out of shape! I'm carrying more weight around the beltline too, but that's gravity's fault! Anyway, I am told that you can keep active and slow the aging processes some. It's a lifestyle choice, and it's up to you to not let your age dictate what you feel you can do. Just be responsible.

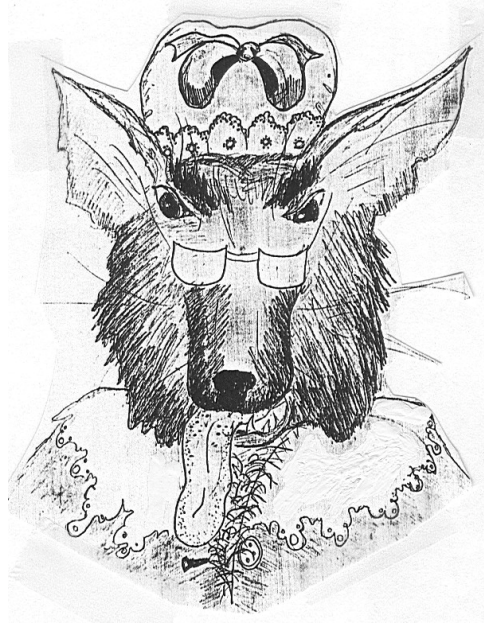
I have the will (wild hair?) to just go caving, but the body sometimes won't follow . . . you know the story? Yes, it's another sign of old age. Now I know of other over-fifty cavers that are still active, but the number of trips they go on are fewer too. Is it that we are more conservation-minded? I really wonder if I ever will see Mammoth Cave or other famous caves . . . I certainly don't have a chance of seeing Lech because I'm so out-of-shape and clumsy. I figure if I steer away from those trips and save it for some expert expedition caver, the cave is much better off. A caver should be honest with him or herself and with your trip leaders, about your own fears and limitations.

Yes, as I approach the (late) Fall of my years, I've had to make some allowances. And so instead of moping around camp, while a real hard core trip is taking place, I should just plan on going for a long hike to check out the karst for caves. Staying active is important . . . and boy do I know that! This winter was too long, about 20 pounds too long!

I can also fit perfectly into the cave management scheme, if not professionally, but on the public level. Being the Devil's Advocate, I take pride in helping to get the conversation and thought processes going on a management problem, and allowing the other party to come to the conclusion that "it was their idea in the first place!" And what an ideal situation that is, where everybody is happy, even the caves! Cave management is an ongoing thing, that takes

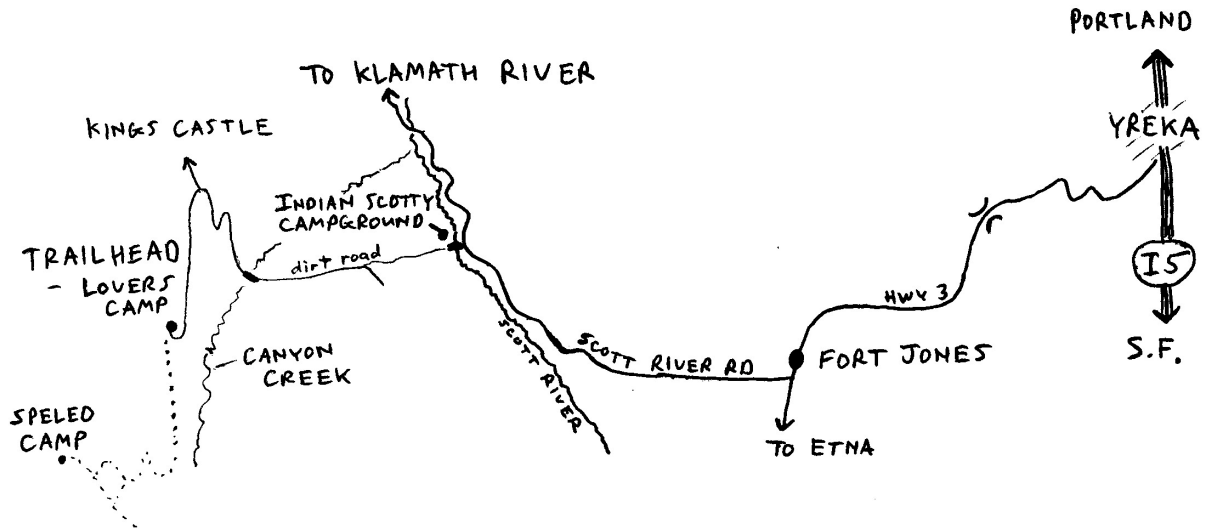
much energy and time, and that is what few want to do – but, it is necessary. Someday, though, the ball will be in your court, dear reader, and you may be asked to help in this endeavor, so be prepared!

I feel that I've done plenty of scooping virgin passages and bop trips that I'm more or less duty-bound to protect the caves we all love and want to protect. If it means less caving and more politickin', then so be it! We have a new generation of cavers and a bunch of new caves out there somewhere for them to map and, study, so why not jump on the band wagon even if you are "old"? **JW**

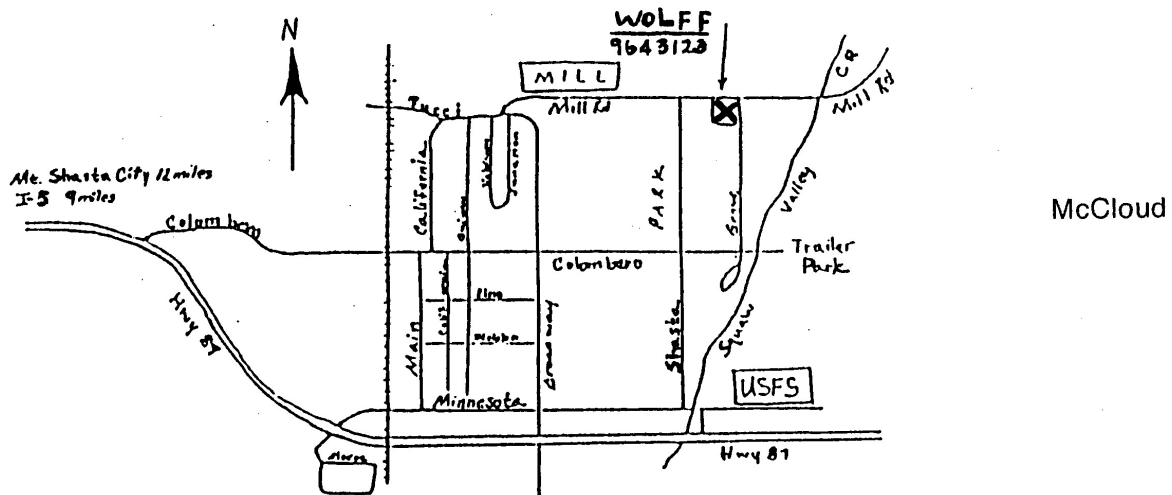


CAVE CALENDAR – 1998

- Sept 4 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting – Marble Mountains.
- Sept 4-7 KMCTF Marble Mountains Labor Day Speleocamp.



- Oct 2 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting – Wolffs in McCloud, 7:30 PM.
- Oct 9-11 Western Regional at Camp Marston, Julian, California.
- Oct 9-12 Marble Mountains Columbus Day Speleocamp.



Nov 7 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting – On the coast with Mark Fritzke and Linda Villatore. Bring desserts, beverages, and appetizers (non-oven stuff). New slides of Hurricane Crawl continue the coast tradition of great programs.

July 12-16, '99 1999 NSS Convention, Twin Falls, Idaho. (Plan ahead).

JULY 1 ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER CAVE By Liz Wolff

Ray Miller and Liz Wolff traveled to Tulelake to meet U.S. Forest Service biologist Jim Villegas to go caving, officially. We were to check some entrances found while surveying for a proposed power line route. We had been in the area a few weeks before with Russ Yoder, following verbal directions and a faxed topo sheet. We weren't sure we had found Jim's caves, so we returned with him. He took us to an earth crack that Ray had found, but to a different spot. This spot was deep, about 35-40 feet and partially roofed with wedged rocks. It wasn't a trench, which was expected from the verbal description. Ray's spot only went down about 20 feet.

From there we headed east to a small sink Russ had found, with a rock cairn over an entrance. We hadn't entered the cave then because we were looking for bat use sites, and the entrance was blocked with tall grasses. Looking in, rock walls across the passage met our eyes. Liz crawled in and was soon walking; Ray and Jim being taller never got to walk. A quick survey was done, netting 434' of cave. Jim told us later that the cave had been found and the rock walls described by an archeologist named McKeehan, and should be named Young McKeehan Cave for him. Jim, not being a caver and a bit apprehensive about being beyond daylight in a cave, went as far as the last, low corner, before exiting the cave. In the cave we found the rock walls and rabbit bones including a skull, but no bats. This was not one of the caves he wanted us to check, but new to him, so another trip will have to be made for his other one. **LW**



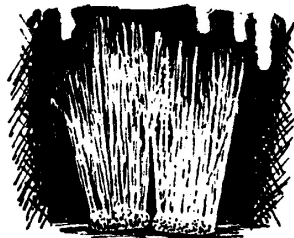
Photo of Liz Wolff in another cave (Christmas Tree North)

YOUNG MCKEEHAN CAVE

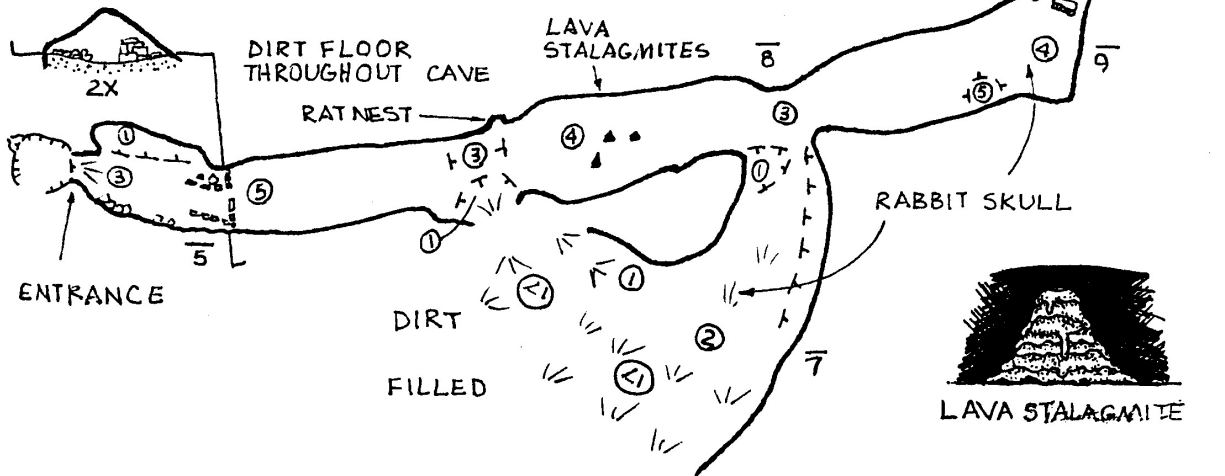
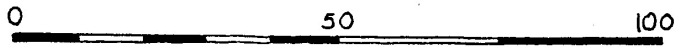
MODOC COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

SURVEY BY:
R. MILLER
J. VILLEGAS
L. WOLFF
7-1-98

CAVE LENGTH: 434 FEET
CAVE DEPTH: 134 FEET



FUNGUS ON RAT DROPPINGS



Map: Young McKeehan Cave



This page is devoted to the Southern Oregon Grotto, which continues to meet at Bruno's Pizza on Roberts Road in Medford on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Good contacts are:

Bill Kenney (541) 883-2781
Ron Osbourne (541) 855-9635
Bill Fitzpatrick (541) 779-1201
Ernie Coffman (541) 471-1202
Russ Yoder (541) 608-9181

ANOTHER TYPE OF TRIP TO SCORPION CAVE By Ernie Coffman

In the September '97 *Devil's Advocate*, Merrilee Proffitt wrote an outstanding article on the Diablo trip to Scorpion Cave, just over the Oregon-California line, about 200 yards. For years and years, I've wanted to make that trip, but one excuse after another was forthcoming from our trip leaders. Oh well! I was living in Oregon, now, and it would be simpler. Not! Finally, after five years – almost to the day that we moved up here – a trip was scheduled for Scorpion Cave. As Merrilee pointed out, there were lots of e-mails and phone calls, between Ron Osbourne and the Mother Lode Grotto, and not Diablo.

The basic gist of the trip was written quite well, from Merrilee's point of view, and I would assume from talking with Marianne Russo, Karole Ward, John Hargreaves, and Steffen Hartmann, that the run up I-5 and back was similar, so we won't go into the details. The major difference was the fact that they arrived at the trailhead and continued up the trail that Friday evening, so they came trooping into camp about an hour after we arrived. Brave souls! Weren't they aware of the cougars, bears, and who knows what else lurks out on those trails in the pitch dark of night?

The next morning, we were up bright and early, heading on up the trail, exactly as Merrilee described it last year, "... was a beautiful day, and the wildflowers were just glorious as we hiked to the cave." After slipping and sliding down the mountain, knowing what goes down must come back up, we arrived at the first limestone lens and then the second. I asked our leader, Ron Osborne – who by the way, was the leader last year, but not credited – where the cave was, from where we were standing. He indicated that it was probably directly below us! Looking out into the beautiful Trinity Alps was spectacular, needless to say. We climbed on down to the entrance, by passing some young buzzard chicks, that were hissing at us.

We spotted an area for the photo monitoring, that looked like we were on target, but decided that it was taken with a wide-angle lens or something would show up better, farther into the trip. We were down to ten photos to match up and this was going to be a

challenge. The Forest Service was really making detectives out of us. After awhile, I started getting squeamish – this being a first, but had observed in others, over the years – for some reason or another. Was it the long, hot climb? The lack of water – always should drink more than what we need – or other reasons? I had been doing a lot of climbing on my ladder the past two weeks, painting the house, and working on an apartment, but ... squeamish feelings? Not me! But, yes! So I thought it would be best if I retired out of the cave, for safety and so the others wouldn't be put into jeopardy and lose sight of what the trip was for. Another SAR friend, Elvira Skurdal, who had recently joined the Southern Oregon Grotto, opted out with me, even though I tried to get her to continue with the project.

As we were climbing out of the cave, another SOG member – Russ Yoder – needed to by-pass us and get his pack and take care of himself – so we let him do that. He, also, took our pictures as we were exiting. He went back in to the pit, but before he was down, John from MLG was climbing up, indicating that he was tired. And, right after that, we heard talking from the others, who were on their way out, also. What had I started? Elvira and I were both on our way, climbing past the hissing buzzards, up into the limestone lens, when I took a tumble. Scraped my right arm and twisted my bum leg, but fortunately I had my brace on, so up and out of there! The others had by-passed us, somehow, off to the left, so we met up with them as they were getting on to the main trail. Our guest, Darryl Rasmussen, who is from the SOG area, was with Russ and they beat feet and were out of there for some reason. In fact, as we dragged into camp, they had already picked up their tents and backpacks and were on the trail to the trailhead.

The MLG group and Ron were sitting around camp, munching on vittles for dinner, and suggested that we divide my pack up, so that it would be easier on my knee on doing the trail that evening. I was already to stay the evening, so ... had to think about that one. Would it be better to get out there or to stay? That is the question! (Shades of Hamlet.) while we were talking, eating, drinking, and thinking things over, I got a wing-ding cramp in my right leg, from my ankle to my groin, but fortunately, Karole was able to work it out with some of her PT knowledge. Bless you my child!

Ron and Steffen took my caving gear, which made my pack lighter, so we all started on the downward trail to our vehicles. Thank goodness for everyone's thoughtfulness, for it made the trip a lot easier, but also made me thinking as to what went wrong this weekend. Was it time to end these types of trips or what? Needless to say, a lot of soul searching has gone on since the trip. The seven of us drove over to Jacksonville, where we dined out at a Mexican Restaurant, and eventually bid our adieu, so they could bed down at a nearby campground, and the rest of us could drive for home. A great time, considering all the problems, but this was a different type of Scorpion Cave trip, than last year.

EC

(Ed. Next issue Ernie writes about the '98 NSS Convention.)

REPRINT from *INSIDE EARTH*, a newsletter of the National Park Service Cave & Karst Programs, Vol.1, Num.1, Spring 1998, edited by Dale L. Pate, and available on the internet.

OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT (ORCA)

By John Roth

During the last year, the staff at Oregon Caves National Monument has been working on a \$35,000 grant from Canon Corporation to develop a CD-ROM and webpage on cave data from Hawaii and North America north of Mexico. About 2,000 pages of material have been developed so far, including cave faunas and folklore, bibliographies, lesson plans, teacher's guides, cave RM and I&M generic plans, cave biology and geology summaries, info on NPS caves and lists of equipment and addresses. Any further additions to this material would be welcomed. Contractual work with many of the major cave taxonomists in the US and Canada is yielding revised taxon and state lists for the most important cave states and cave-associated groups of animals. The next phase will be to acquire photographs and drawings of many of the major cave features for use in an illustrated geo-glossary.

A review of G1 cave species (globally known from five sites or less) revealed that NPS and other federal caves as well as many privately owned commercial caves are major repositories of such species. Oregon Caves currently leads the pack with 9 species known only from a single cave, followed by Samwel (USFS), Malheur, Carlsbad and Mammoth. Oregon Caves will most likely lose its lead as some of the species (most undescribed) appear to be troglomenes. Tracking of G1 species by USFWS or state natural heritage programs average 26%, a much higher percentage than what was tracked ten years ago.

The focus in Oregon Caves during the last year has been paleontology. Hundreds of claw marks and some paw prints indicate that a remote part of the main cave was used as a hibernaculum during the Pleistocene. Renovation of the last part of the cave trail revealed in-situ bones of Ice Age black bear under a thick layer of flowstone. The trail was routed around the bones and a permanent exhibit is being developed to showcase the bones to cave visitors. Excavations by Dr. Mead and associates from Northern Arizona University has uncovered one grizzly, two black bears, a jaguar, a bobcat, many bats, and part of a mountain beaver. There are only two other caves known to have bones of mountain beavers, the most ancestral of all surviving rodents.

JR



DON'T BECOME LUNCH FOR A MOUNTAIN LION

By Ray Miller

Normally humans are the top of the food chain in the U.S., but on occasion this is contested by a mountain lion. There have been 10 fatal attacks on people in the past 108 years. This is a very small number unless you happen to be a victim. If you don't panic and follow a few simple rules you lessen the chance of confrontation or attack.

Currently the only control of the California mountain lion population is starvation, and an empty stomach leads to boldness and risk taking. Hunting was stopped in 1990 when a proposition passed naming the lion a "Special Protected Animal." Today the population is 4,000 to 6,000 animals and rapidly increasing.

Half of the fatal attacks have occurred in the past 10 years and the frequency of attack is expected to increase. Each healthy adult male lion stakes out a home territory of about 100 square miles and defends it vigorously. The females claim a smaller territory. The weaker animals are pushed to the edge of their habitat where they encounter encroaching people. This leads to a population of lions with a diminished fear of humans increasing the danger of attack. Recent confrontations all occurred near civilization, but this does not mean an encounter in a remote location is not possible.

Little research has been done on avoiding mountain lion attacks, but here are the CA Dept. of Fish and Game suggestions based on mountain lion behavior:

- **DO NOT HIKE ALONE:** Go in groups, with adults supervising children.
- **KEEP CHILDREN CLOSE TO YOU:** Observations of captured wild mountain lions reveal that the animals seem especially drawn to children. Keep children within your sight at all times.

- **DO NOT APPROACH A LION:** Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.

- **DO NOT RUN FROM A LION:** Running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children with you, pick them up if possible so they don't panic and run. Although it may be awkward, pick them up without bending over or turning away from the mountain lion.

- **DO NOT CROUCH DOWN OR BEND OVER:** In Nepal, a researcher studying tigers and leopards watched the big cats kill cattle and domestic water buffalo while ignoring humans standing nearby. He surmised that a human standing up is just not the right shape for a cat's prey. On the other hand, a person squatting or bending over looks a lot like a four-legged prey animal. If you're in mountain lion country, avoid squatting, crouching or bending over, even when picking up children.

- **DO ALL YOU CAN TO APPEAR LARGER:** Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Again, pick up small children. Throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey and that you may be a danger to it.

- **FIGHT BACK IF ATTACKED:** A hiker in Southern California used a rock to fend off a mountain lion that was attacking his son. Others have fought back successfully with sticks, caps, jackets, garden tools and their bare hands. Since a mountain lion usually tries to bite the head or neck, try to remain standing and face the attacking animal.

RM

SHASTA AREA GROTTO E-MAIL LIST

Bair Family	werall1@humboldt1.com
Broeckel Family	jbroeckel@snowcrest.net
Fritzke, Mark	villator@humboldt1.com
Helton, Pat	phelton@globe.arc.nasa.gov
Jackson, Melanie	melanie@thegrid.net
Kenney Family	kenneyfam@aol.com
LaForge Family	klaforg@htan.org
Miller, Ray	rmmbats@snowcrest.com
Rogers, Bruce	bwrogers@octopus.wr.usgs.gov
Wolff Family	Wolff_Jim/r5_shastatrinity@fs.fed.us

(Please send or e-mail additions and corrections to the SAG RAG c/o Broeckel)

SAG RAG
524 Annie Street
Yreka CA 96097

STAMP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 2	Chairman's Message, by Jim Wolff	TO:
Page 4	Cave Calendar	
Page 6	Another Day, Another Cave, by Liz Wolff	
Page 7	Young McKeehan Cave map, by Liz Wolff	
Page 8	SOG LOG: Scorpion Cave, by Ernie Coffman	
Page 10	SOG LOG: Oregon Caves (reprint), by John Roth	
Page 11	Don't Be a Mountain Lion's Lunch, by Ray Miller	
Page 12	Shasta Area Grotto E-mail List	

FUTURE ISSUE

Hat Creek Report – still coming, by B. Broeckel
1998 NSS Convention Reflections, by E. Coffman
Klamath National Forest Cave Workshop, by L. Wolff

Remove Staple For Inspection