

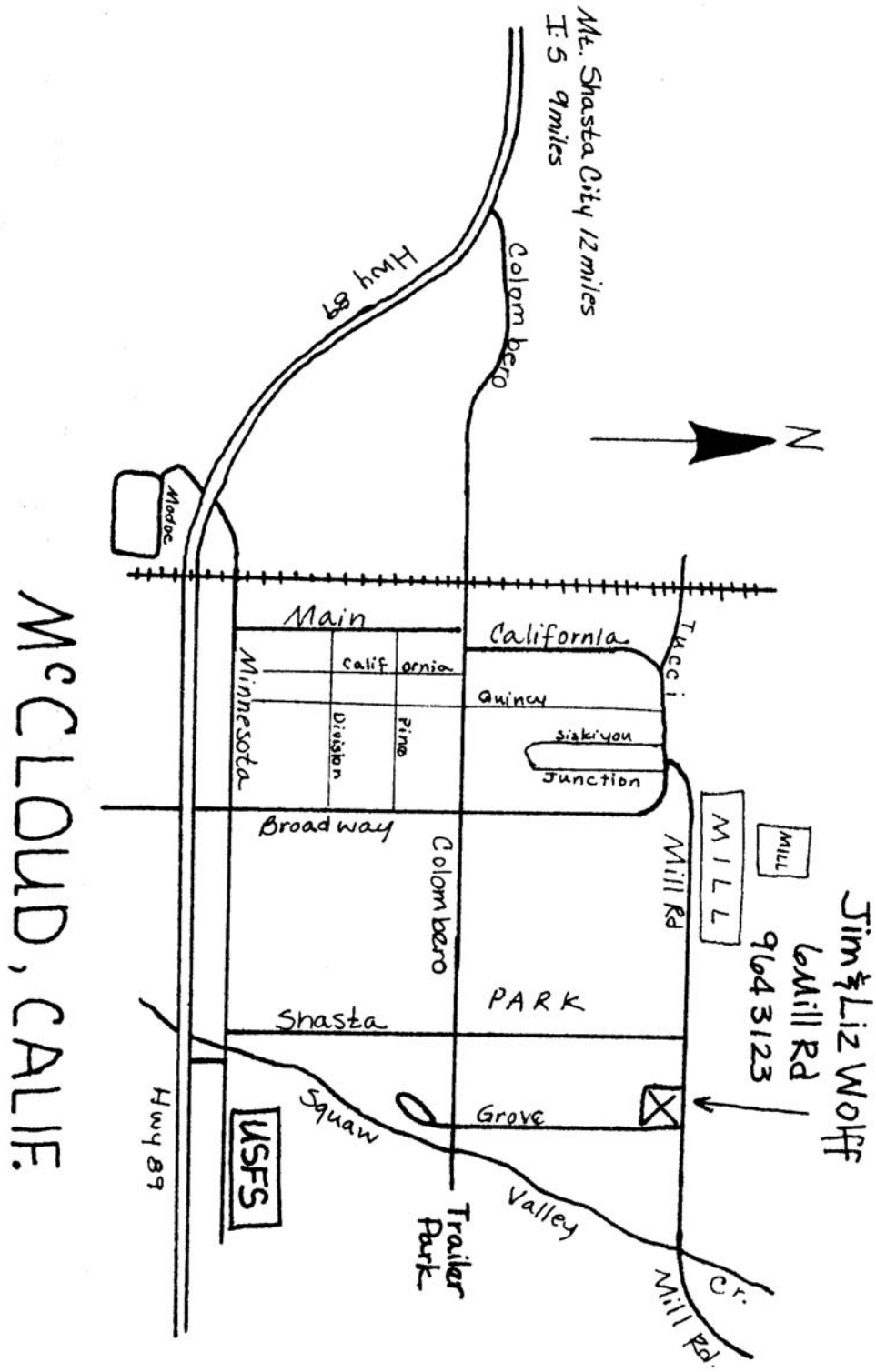


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April
1983

Liz Wolf
11-82



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

COMING EVENTS

- April 8 Grotto meeting.
At Jim and Liz Wolff's, 6 Mill Road, McCloud 964-3123.
- April 9-10 Field trips.
Lava tubes near McCloud.
Rope practice. – Weather permitting. Bring your vertical gear.
- May 13 Grotto meeting.
At Claude and Mary Belle Smith's, 131 Oleander Circle, Redding 246-3942.
- May 28-30 French Creek area.
Caving, mapping, exploration, camping, backpacking, ridge-walking, etc. with Roger Jones in the Trinity Alps. (See article this issue.)
- June Guadalupes.
Smiths will be vacationing and caving in Carlsbad, New Mexico. Grotto members are welcome to join them.
- Sept 3-5 Joint Western – Northwest Caving Association Regional.
At Shasta Lake, hosted by us.

DUES COMING DUE

Several members' dues will be due in May. Check the date after your name on the membership list to see when your dues are due. Dues are \$4.00/year per individual, or \$6.00/year per family. Dues cover subscription and postage for the SAG RAG.

GROTTO LOGO

At last!! After an 8 month incubation period, the Grotto Logo has been hatched. To get your very own clone of this creation, bring \$3.00 and a T-shirt, or Sweat-shirt, or Chest, or whatever to the next Grotto meeting. Kislings will take over from there.

GROTTO VERTICAL TRAINING PROGRAM (Adopted 6/11/82)

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. Six short rappels and climbs, 25' or more.
2. Climb either 200' in less than 20 minutes ON PRUSIK KNOTS, or 1,000' in a day ON KNOTS.
3. Change over from ascent to descent and from descent to ascent.
4. Change over ascent to another rope.
5. Change over a knot in the main rope while descending.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of rope rigging knots and rope protection methods.
7. Knowledge of a bowline on a coil for tying into a belay line; be able to rig and use a belay anchor and belay from a sitting position.
8. Demonstrate proper control technique using an acceptable descending device.

KNOTS

1. Knowledge of the following knots is required: bowline, figure eight, double fisherman's.
2. Knowledge of the following knots is RECOMMENDED: tape (for webbing), butterfly, and clove hitch.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

1. Seat harness – adjustable or nonadjustable; design your own or buy a commercially made harness (guidance will be provided).
2. Chest harness – adjustable or nonadjustable; design one or purchase one (guidance provided).
3. LOCKING carabiners – for harnesses, rigging, etc.
4. Auxiliary carabiners – aluminum – for rigging and other purposes; it is recommended that these also be LOCKING.
5. Descending device –
 - a) rappel rack with SIX brake bars, preferably;
 - b) two carabiners and brake bars – better for shorter rappels.
6. Three prusik knots for climbing, plus one spare knot.
7. Two safety loops to be worn around ankles over foot knots, preferably sewn from 1" tubular nylon webbing (... chicken loops).
8. Helmet with secure chin strap.
9. Gloves for descending preferably with imitation suede or leather hand grips; gloves can be used for climbing if desired.

VERTICAL PROCEDURES

1. All climbers check rigging of main rope.
2. Buddy check system: check each other's climbing gear before descent and climbing.
3. The two most experienced cavers should be first and last.
4. Person on bottom belays person on rappel.
5. Always yell "on rope" and "off rope" as appropriate, or use proper whistle signals; MAKE SURE someone on bottom responds to the call "on rope" before beginning a rappel.
6. If you drop something or dislodge a rock, yell "ROCK" promptly and loudly.
7. Wear a helmet at all times around a pit; stay clear of the rock fall zone at the bottom when anyone is on rope.
8. Pad the lip of pits where rope contact is involved, and any other places, as necessary.

GROTTO VERTICAL TRAINING PROGRAM (continued)

9. Carry an extra Jumar or prusik knot **HANDY** in case of difficulty while descending or ascending, or for assistance at lips or ledges.
10. On new or wet rope, or when carrying extra gear, use one more brake bar than usual until you have checked your control on descending.
11. Avoid jumping or unnecessary bouncing on rope, which can result in rope abrasion or dislodging of rocks from above.
12. Cavers should stay clear of the lip of a pit unless preparing to descend, to avoid dislodging rocks.
13. One or more cavers on a trip should always be carrying a rescue pulley while caving.
14. Do not step on rope.
15. **BE PREPARED!!**

The following list was handed out by Eileen Carol, from the Southern Cal Grotto, at the Speleo-Educational seminar. Eileen is a registered nurse and First Aide instructor.

FIRST AID KIT**INDIVIDUAL**

Large Plastic Garbage Bag
 Large and Small Band-Aids
 Large Paper Clips, Tongue Blades, Pencil for Finger Splint
 1" Adhesive Tape
 3x3 or 4x4 Gauze Dressings
 Matches in Waterproof Container
 Aspirin
 Shock Solution (1 tsp. Salt, 1/2 tsp. Soda to be Added to 1 Quart Water to be Sipped at 5 Minute Intervals)
 Optional:
 Small Elastic Bandage
 1" Gauze Roll
 Betadine Antiseptic
 Antibiotic Ointment
 Small Bar Soap (Dial)

GROUP

Larger and More Dressings, Bandages, Splints
 Small Camp Stove, Fuel, Small Pot or Cup
 Water and Powdered Nutrients (Soups, Tea, Cocoa)
 Wool Blankets
 Rescue Equipment
 Spine Board
 Extra Ropes
 Pulleys
 Basic First Aid Kit Above

**WILL WE FIND FRENCH CAVES
OR FRENCH MAIDS IN FRENCH CREEK ?
(Reprint)**

(Reprinted from article by Liza DeLucia in the April 1983 So. Cal. Grotto's *The Explorer*)

LABOR DAY WEEKEND – 1982. It was tough from the very beginning. After a fourteen hour drive, we met up with a crotchety old miner not even five minutes after we parked. We drove all night and the last thing we wanted to hear was that we couldn't park here – something about private land and the nearest place to park being three miles away. We didn't want to return from our backpacking trip and find our truck was towed away, so we started to leave. The old miner, laughing, said it was okay after all. He'd tell the owners of the land that we were his friends. We weren't sure if we should trust him, but we were anxious to start up into French Creek.

And, boy were we anxious. Probably too anxious, because we had to cross the stream to get to the trail and nobody took their boots off. The unmaintained trail was easy to lose with all the different switchbacks. And being my very first backpacking trip (with a brand new Kelty pack), I was beginning to feel the weight. The hike up was rough, steep switchbacks making us very tired. We gained 3,000 feet in elevation. The hike was only supposed to be three miles, but it felt more like 23.

We didn't carry much water having been advised that there was plenty in the creek. We never made the creek. Nightfall was upon us and we were all completely out of water. We had hiked down the saddle a long time ago and the creek was nowhere in sight or ear shot. Joe and Mark volunteered to look for water while the rest of us set up camp. It looked dim. We decided to leave in the morning if no water could be found.

Don and Bob were almost asleep and I was busy writing when all of a sudden I kept hearing branches break. I saw Bob pop his head out of his bivi-sack and I yelled out hoping it was Joe and Mark. Mark answered with a "Yoo!" Before I knew it, they were back with water. Never had cold water tasted so good.

We were expecting to meet up with another group and occasionally yelled out to see if they had made it yet. Nobody ever answered. We were all alone.

SEPT. 4 – MORNING. After spending a chilly night, it was hard to get out of my sleeping bag. Don, mark, and Joe were up. We were contemplating starting breakfast when suddenly we heard a loud yell from far above. Mark was ecstatic. He knew it was Roger Jones and went up to meet him. All the while we thought Roger was with a group, but when they came back to camp we saw that he was traveling solo.

Roger had to work at the lumber mill on Friday and didn't even start hiking until 8:00 p.m. We on the other hand were asleep by 9:00 p.m. Roger slept the night out on the saddle. He was too tired after hiking in the dark all the way up the ridge to reach the creek. When Joe and Mark hiked down for water, they found out that we were only 10-15 minutes from the creek. But by then, we were too exhausted to continue.

The plans were set for the day. Joe, Roger and Mark set out to locate a base camp. They would follow the karst up. Bob, Don and I would follow the creek down in search of virgin cave.

FRENCH CREEK (continued)

SATURDAY – BACK AT CAMP. We arrived back at camp around 5:30 p.m. totally beat. It had been a long, hard trip and we were almost dry again. There was no stream where we had been, so we were very thirsty.

We had followed the creek down for about 1/2 mile and then headed up the left ridge in search of karst. Immediately we found some. It covered a fair area. Roger found a small crack and I tried to crawl in. It was too tight, but I did see some white, green, and pink popcorn. We walked uphill a little more, but only found big limestone rocks. It started to look bad, so we walked up and across the ridge towards the saddle. It felt as if we were lost in a forest. It was so thickly timbered, we couldn't see any karst.

We walked for a long way and finally came to a large karst plateau. On the lower left side we found a 35-foot-deep pit with a tree next to it. The plateau had many more pits but none of them went. We scouted some more and realized that all the bushwhacking had left us extremely tired. We were again low on water. We found a nice little canyon about 15-20 feet down in the karst. It could have made a neat cave entrance.

We started back to camp and called out to Joe and Mark. They didn't answer. We figured they were down pushing in a cave. We had to bushwhack some more and our feet seemed to stumble more on the rocks. Several times I got hit in the face by branches. We seemed to be closer to the streambed when Roger let out an excited gasp. He found a cave! It went down in a pit with nice karst speleothems, and went back to the left. There seemed to be a small crack that could go on the right. We tried downclimbing it but the handholds let go in our hands; and the cave flared out towards the bottom. We tried throwing a tree trunk in but it went too far. We then set landmarks and placed a cairn at the entrance. As we walked back we found last night's camp spot. It wasn't far from the cave.

We ended up beating the guys back to camp. They found six little caves. One was a 100 foot crawlway that went completely through the ridge. The last one they spotted was almost to the top of the karst and had an 8 foot high entrance. The others they found weren't significant. They were as beat as we were and also out of water.

SUNDAY MORNING. It was even harder to wake up than it was yesterday. We had gone to bed early but our bodies were repaying us for the torture of the past two days. As Joe put it, we were playing "beat the body." Mark had a huge fire waiting for us. A sure lure that worked – it got Bob out of his bivi-sack! During breakfast we decided to stay together and scout for caves. We would first check out the two pits we found and then explore further up the ridge.

Walking up, we took a break at last night's campsite. Don dropped his canteen along the way and went back to look for it. Yesterday mark lost his brand new camera. Joe made a quip about opening a swap meet with all the things the forest had collected. While Don was searching, Joe and Mark left to look for the camera. Neither Don nor Mark found their missing items.

There was no problem finding the first pit. We walked right to it and spotted the landmarks. Roger dropped the pit with the aid of Joe's webbing. Mark and Don followed. They pushed all the leads, but none of them went. This created excitement; there was a cave in the area. A big cave!

FRENCH CREEK (continued)

Walking up from the pit, Joe found another one. He immediately bopped into it and Don and Mark quickly followed. Roger left to check out an obvious hole and I walked higher up the ridge searching for more leads. Bob waited at the entrance. When Roger returned, we were surprised that the guys were still in the cave. They went down the pit using the aid of a fallen log against the wall. Joe, Mark and Don were not in sight but their voices sounded close. Mark came out saying that it went down a small passage and up a chimney to two tight passages. They pushed them as far as they could.

We left the cave and headed for the karst plateau. We could see the tube tent Roger had left on the saddle. On the way up we split up with Joe and Mark taking the left ridge. We were to meet on the plateau. Bob, Roger, Don, and I reached the plateau with Joe and Mark nowhere in sight. They were even out of earshot.

An hour passed and still they had not appeared. Roger left and climbed down the second pit we had found yesterday. It didn't go. We called out to the guys and this time they answered. They were way above us. Every time we yelled, Joe answered with "we're coming." That was an hour ago. We four decided to see if they'd want to backpack down and out the creek so we could cover more territory. But it was getting late and the guys weren't back yet.

Finally we heard them, they were near. They had climbed all the way to top and again found nothing. They also wanted to hike out down the creek. We went back to camp and Roger left to retrieve his tube tent. Roger, being a self admitted 'Alps man,' took no time at all to reach us back at camp.

We quickly packed and headed through the brush. We figured it would take three hours to climb down the two miles. It was 4:10 p.m. That would give us an hour to spare.

Right from the beginning we knew it would be tough backpacking French Creek. Dead branches stood out everywhere. It was bushwhacking all the way. Boulders had to be climbed and our packs kept getting in the way. We came to a small cliff face and carefully climbed it. It led to a 20 foot waterfall and we had to climb down one at a time because of loose rock. We were "rock skiing" with backpacks and it was easy to "eat it."

There seemed to be an obstacle every four feet: branches, logs, boulders, with large pools of water. We knew it would be slow going anyway and the backpacks sure didn't help.

And then Don yelled "RATTLESNAKE!!" Roger walked right over it and Don saw it moving. He carefully moved it aside and mark almost tripped on it rushing over to see it.

Farther down the creek, Joe spotted some holes and everybody but Bob and I went to check it out. They didn't go.

Passing over a log, both Roger and Don got stung by yellow jackets. Roger had walked on their nest.

We hiked onward, battling the overgrowth. The creek kept disappearing and resurging. We took a breather and Bob removed the stinger from Don's arm.

FRENCH CREEK (continued)

We climbed down the steep canyon by-passing the stream a little ways. As we got back to the creek we came upon a spectacular karst cliff with a wide inviting cave entrance. Everyone frantically searched for their helmets and took off towards the cave. Bob was the only one who lingered. The huge entrance didn't go. Bob started yelling. He found a blowing crack. At first, everyone thought he was kidding. But it did go. Everyone raced over to it.

It was a great cave. All along Bob kept calling it "French Horn," until we got to the very end and found a cairn. This had to be the cave Steve Knudsen found when he had explored French Creek back in '75. There went "French Horn," the virgin cave. But the name stuck. Apparently Steve never named it. The cave was fun. It had tight crawlways, walking passages in different directions, difficult climbs, and another entrance. We did a through trip our first time in! At the second entrance there was a deer jawbone with all the teeth intact. We estimated over 1000 feet of cave passage and some were still going.

We had spent over an hour in the cave and it was almost dark. We rushed down the creek, balancing over fallen logs, dodging swinging branches, trying to avoid slipping into pools of freezing cold water. It was quite the challenge with backpacks. Nobody had told me it would be this hard. And I don't think anyone would have gone if they knew. We met up with another rattler, only this one wasn't as friendly. Night was upon us and we didn't even know how far down we were. We hiked down with our lights on. Everyone was stumbling, even Joe. To see Joe stumble every few feet meant that it was a very hard trip. But we pushed on. We had to reach the truck.

Finally, we realized that we were risking injury if we proceeded. We started looking for a campsite. All we could find were cliffs and rocks and streams, nothing flat. About 1/2 hour later we couldn't take it anymore and threw our sleeping bags over rocks between the cliffs and the creek.

We had underestimated French Creek.

We woke up stiff from the rocks. Nobody slept right. It was tough trying to get our bodies moving again.

Farther down French Creek we ran into more "rock skiing," boulder hopping, and branch slapping. The boulders got larger and we had to climb up and over them. The flora seemed to grow. Umbrella plants with leaves over a foot large covered everything from our ankles down. It was hairy climbing, not knowing if your foot was going to reach bottom. We knew that we had done the best thing by camping out the night. We never could have made it all the way down.

We finally found the trail along the mountainside and followed it to the stream. It felt wonderful crossing the stream and everyone seemed to stop dead center to take a "last picture" in the stream. It took us three hours to get to the truck. We had estimated that it would only take three hours to climb down French Creek! During breakfast, we teased about only "fools backpacking French Creek." But, you know what? We'd do it again.

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