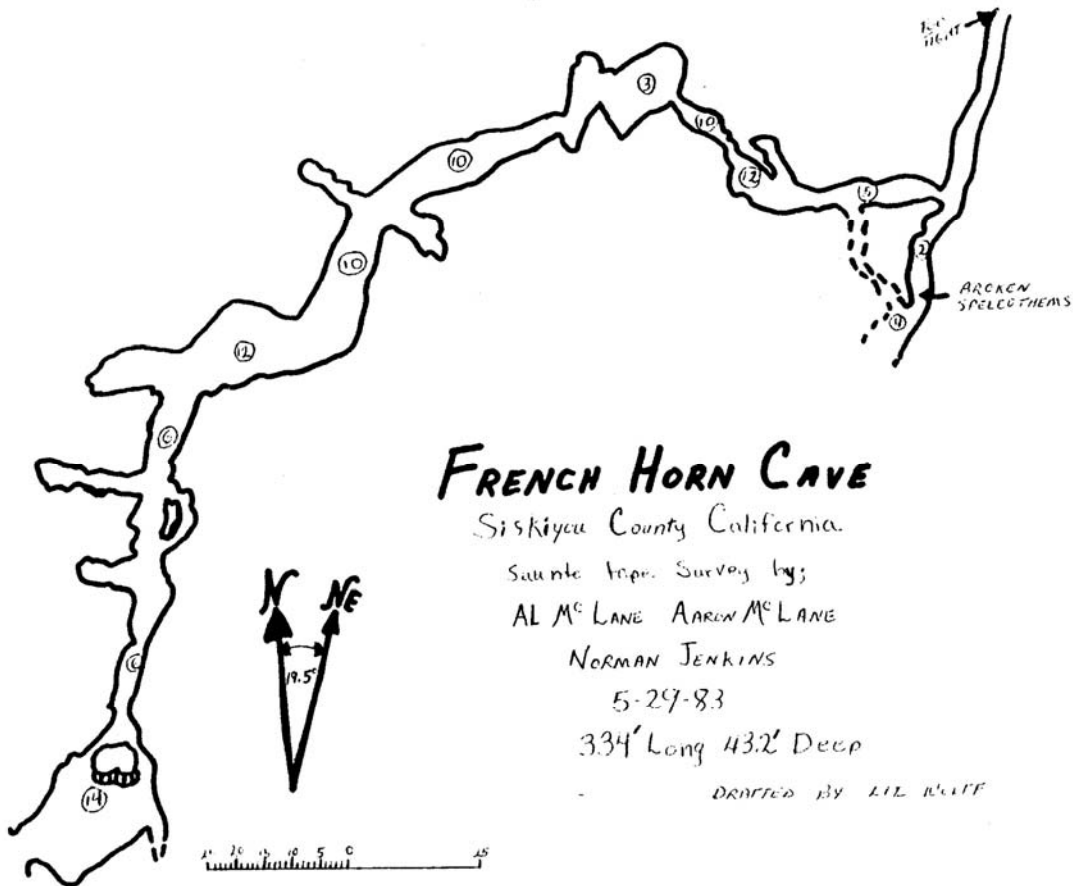


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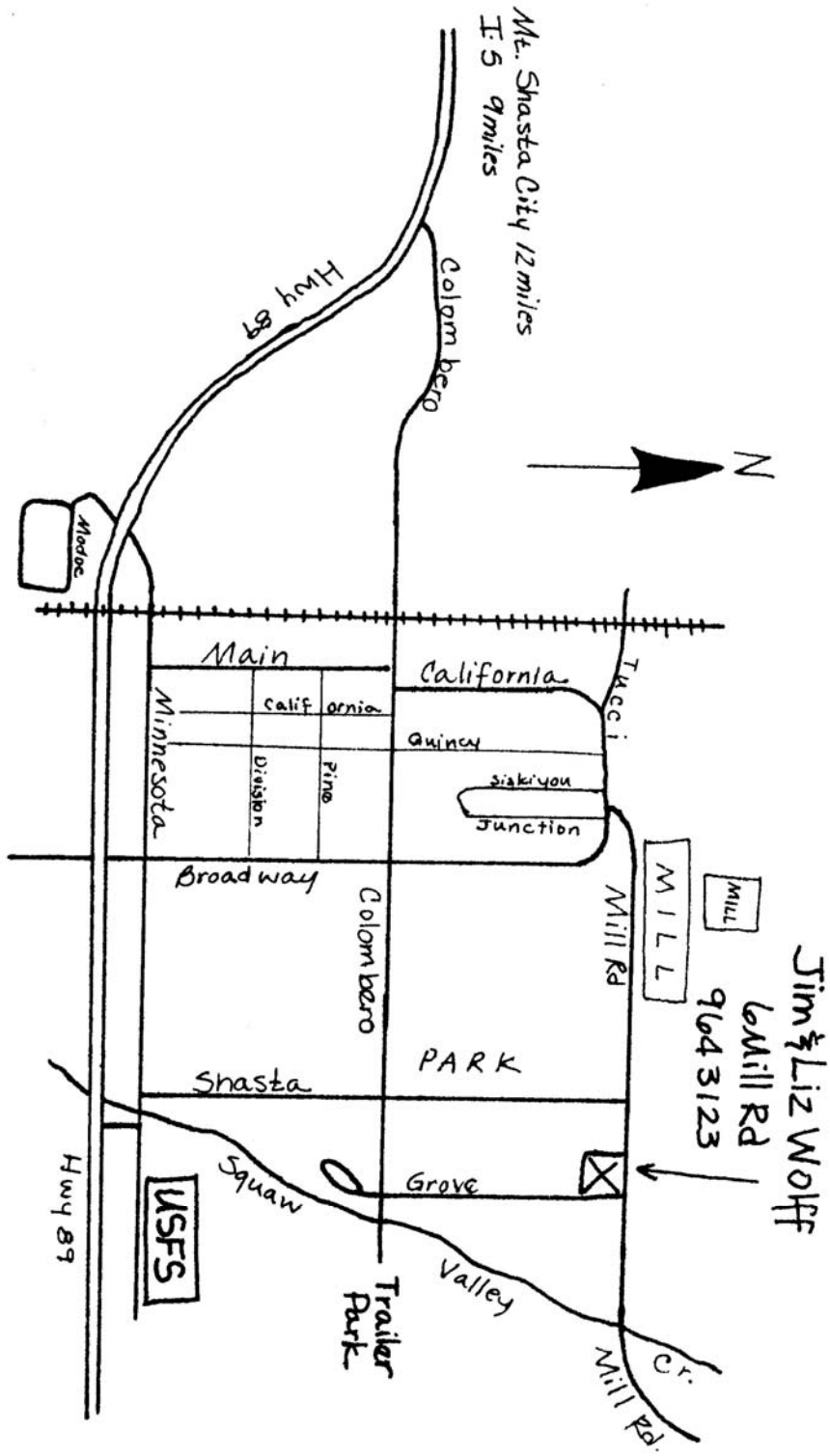
# THE SAG RAG

August  
1983



Map: French Horn Cave

# McCLOUD, CALIF.



Published bi-monthly beginning in February by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editor is Claude A. Smith, at 131 Oleander Circle, Redding, CA. 96001. Subscription rate is \$3.00/year.

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.

### COVER

Cover artwork by Arley and Sharon Kisling is probably a good indication of Arley's feelings about the Memorial Day trip to French Creek and visit to French Creek Cave. Read Arley's account in this issue and make your own conclusions.

### COMING EVENTS

- July 21-24      Marbles.  
Arley and Claude will be leaving McCloud 2:00 p.m. Thursday, and checking the cave entrances around Marble Valley Friday. Jim Wolff, and Allen Johnson from Oregon, will be hiking in sometime Friday. Call Jim 964-3123, for details.
- August 12      Grotto meeting.  
At Don and Audra Quinton's, 15 Manzanita, Title 9, Herlong 827-2610. Bring steak for barbeque Friday night.
- August 13      Morning – Kloppenburg Cave.  
Need vertical gear for 100' drop. Will be short trip.  
Afternoon – Picnicking, fishing and swimming at Sardine Lake. Probably camp at lake and possibly go to Reno Sunday (Quintons volunteered to babysit!) This is definitely a family outing, so bring your spouse and kids.
- Sept 2-5      Western Regional at Shasta Lake.  
Hosted by us at the Salt Creek group campground, Labor Day weekend. We will be offering individual campsites, flush toilets, campfires, a banquet, tour of Shasta Caverns, speleo-olympics, multi-media slide show with REAL electricity, beer and soft drinks, Samwel trips, trips to lava tubes, an auction, and an all-around good time. Telephone at the campground is 238-2616.
- Sept 6-11      Marbles Speleo-camp?
- Sept 9      Grotto meeting.  
Tentatively in Marbles.
- Oct 14      Grotto meeting.  
Probably at Smiths' in Redding.

## A LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP FROM YOUR CHAIRPERSON

I've been meaning to put an article in the past SAG RAGs, but neglected to ..., let's say that I had nothing to say. Actually, I could discuss the grotto in general; from where we started to our future.

All grottos began with a nucleus of active cavers, like us. They in turn promoted safe caving and good conservation attitudes to others, and sometimes picked up other folk of like concerns and interests. Pretty soon the grotto grows, but not very fast at all!

I was a charter member of the Oregon Grotto and saw the club go through many highs and lows in their membership, but the "regulars" somehow always held the group together. There was never any membership drive per se, but yet, the most interested potential cavers persisted and contacted the grotto through the NSS or other special interest groups who knew of the grotto. So I'm not going to emphasize recruitment of cavers, as they have a way of finding "their own." What I would like to address is the need to strengthen our membership through a bit more commitment from each of us. I'm not saying those who are members now are not all contributing and active members, just that I'd like to see more participation in the grotto. The club will grow, just you see!

As grotto members some of us are contributing already to the cave inventory in the Shasta Trinity N.F., helping with the work of the KMCTF and the Western Region. And even some of us are helping out with the NSS services you receive. But is there more? Yes!

We have been asked to help out the NPCA (National Park Conservation Assn.) by being present for at least four days a month through the month of Sept., at either Lassen or Lava Beds National Parks, or both, spending some time talking to park visitors about your interest, caves. As a result, the public will get a better appreciation of caves and possibly, get their signatures on a petition. The petition speaks of local and national threats, issues that I'm sure the average citizen isn't 'aware of. The NPCA will work with you to produce a park-specific threats fact sheet, flyers, posters, etc. – everything you would need to provide the answers to most all questions. The NPCA will also see to it that you receive the permit from the NPS to conduct this Petition/Education campaign within park boundaries. The NPCA will pay the NSS 10 cents for each signature you receive on their petitions. For every signature the Save the Caves fund gets 4 cents and the grotto gets 6 cents for our own use. Really gang, this deal is for real, and a good number of grottos are in this program at this time. This will certainly help increase the conservation community, Please consider and contact me for further info.

### OCTOPUS CAVE by Jim Wolff

On June 12th, Sunday morning a large group of nine cavers descended upon a new and very complex cave found just south of the main entrance of Bobcat. The cave was discovered the day before by Don Quinton during our post-logging inspection of Bobcat and Rooty Tooty Caves.

Don, along with the rest of us, was ecstatic about the horizontal and vertical complexity of the cave. A real humdinger!! Mapping should give the surveyors many stations of fun! More on this one later ....

**THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A TRIP TO FRENCH CREEK** by Arley Kisling

Memorial Day, 30th of May, 1983.

It was easy from the beginning, sweating over hamburgers and Mexican food in Mt. Shasta. It was not only easy, but downright slack. Jim and I left McCloud about four in the late afternoon, to tie in with Al McLane and his son Aaron, Don Quinton, Neils Smith, and Norm Jenkins, in Mt. Shasta. After we finished stuffing our faces and greasing our insides at the Frosty, it was off to the store for those last minute goodies. All this time the clock runs and the rest of the day passes, like time lapse photography speeded up 100 times.

We left Mt. Shasta about 6:30. After a two hour drive, many imported German beers, and much loud rock n' roll music, the sun sets, and we find ourselves looking for Roger Jones' custom-by-crunch Subaru home on wheels, parked somewhere along the Salmon river.

When we find Roger, it's almost dark and we are parked on a private mining claim, sweet talking some prospector into letting us set up tent city. After an exchange of views and beers, and just plain bull in the dark, permission was given to set up camp.

No one brought a campfire permit, so there was no campfire. Some cavers talked the prospector into telling them lies about some caves just down the road. The rush was on, lights emerged from cave packs, helmets strapped on, and sandals exchanged for boots. After some time, they migrated back, quiet, chins and carbides down low, grumbling about no caves.

When the quest for the lost caves began, I noticed the prospector made a hasty retreat to his trailer to put his fishing gear away. I wonder how many times that fish story was retold.

After the retreat to the ice chest for some cold attitude adjustment and discussions on cave equipment, everyone crawled into their tents for some serious sleepless tossing and turning.

The morning of the following day dawned and grew into midmorning, before everyone packed up and was eyeing the river crossing, a single cable crossing.

Somewhere in the night Dick LaForge and son Seth, joined tent city and by the time we were all ready to cross the river, Dick and Seth were up and about. Dick was eyeing, with the rest of us, one raging torrent. The Salmon River had grown in volume, the result of excessive snow melt. Roger stated that he was unable to obtain the key to the cable trolley. He had phoned Dick the day before, to bring a pulley, so we could get everyone across. Dick brought the pulley, but we found that because of its construction, it could not be taken apart to accept the already attached cable.

Roger mentioned that there was a swinging bridge up stream. Off we went to get a view of the second obstacle, in what was to be just the tip of the iceberg of many such obstacles. The bridge turned out to be intact, spanning approximately 75 to 100 feet of the muddy raging torrent. A span construction of old weathered rotten wood with rusty nails, wired to four cables, greeted us. I did not have to use my vivid imagination to picture what would happen to someone, with 45 to 50 pounds of caving gear, falling into a river of swiftly moving ice water.

### **THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A TRIP TO FRENCH CREEK (continued)**

The bridge was tested by “scouts” without packs, and found to be just dangerous and not necessarily fatal. What a relief! One volunteer at a time crossed swinging and swaying, creaking and cracking, until all were safely on the other bank. After a quarter mile walk downstream to the first cable crossing, we came to Saint Claire Creek and, yes, another crossing, and finally the trail head into French Creek.

By the time everyone got across St. Claire Creek, it was 1:30 in the afternoon and it was getting hot. The relative humidity felt close to the outside temperature, hot. Everyone filled up water bottles and we were off for the next obstacle – the three mile climb up to the drop off point into French Horn Cave. At this point of the trip the party of 9 cavers spread out and the people with lighter packs pulled out in front and out of sight for the rest of the day.

As the day progressed, so did the temperature and humidity, and the strain of the climb began to show on everyone, particularly Neils, the Grotto’s heaviest member. It soon became apparent that Neils was having difficulty keeping up even a moderate pace, and that some caution be taken, to see that the heat and/or climb did not claim Neils! Not knowing exactly where the drop off point was, I decided to see if I could catch up to Roger, our trip leader, to find out where we were to go. Don decided to stay with Neils for the rest of the trip into French creek. Jim, Dick and Seth plugged along keeping tabs on the tail of the party.

I came across Roger, Al and Aaron at four in the afternoon, on top of a hot brushy ridge. Al said that they had been waiting for an hour, and seemed ready to get going. When I asked Roger where the drop off point would be, he said right here, and that French Horn Cave, our destination, should be right about between this rocky bluff and the creek, pointing generally down an 800-foot-deep canyon.

The canyon was moderately brushy, with at least one major side tributary to traverse in route to the general area of the caves. This and the 50 to 60 percent slopes on southwest facing exposures in the late afternoon or early evening heat, nearly convinced me to count this trip off as not worth it. I let Roger know that I would be willing to return back down the trail, with Neils, or anyone else who did not wish to continue from this point on.

Roger and the lead party decided to continue on into French Creek. I asked Roger to show me the direction he would take to get to the limestone bluffs, and to light a smoky signal fire about dark. Nighttime down canyon winds can carry the scent of smoke for miles, and I felt that it might aid in finding each other later.

After Roger and the lead group left, I picked out a shady spot back down the trail and opened some of my food tins, racing the flies and ants for something to eat. Every 5 to 10 minutes, I gave a loud hoot to see if anyone of the trailing party was getting close. Jim answered and appeared like Doctor Livingston from a classic jungle adventure, swatting flies with a rhythmic grace.

After depositing his heavy pack next to mine, I explained what we were in for, including all options. Bathing in his own sweat swimming pool, all I could get in response was a helpless look.

### **THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A TRIP TO FRENCH CREEK (continued)**

Everyone finally made it to the drop off point, and they all had that helpless look that Jim had. After looking back at all the day's trials and tribulations, everyone decided to continue, based on "We've come this far, we might as well go the rest of the way," grumble, grumble.

Don and Neils started out ahead of us, and Jim, Dick, Seth and I ended up crossing above them and losing contact with them. By the time we reached French Creek, it was near dusk and the snow water was very welcome. Dick and Seth proceeded to go swimming.

I got a good strong whiff of smoke at the same time I spotted the pile of rocks Roger had left for trail sign. Since the wind was blowing down canyon, and the limestone bluffs were up stream from us, we decided to continue toward the scent of smoke.

The resurgence, with cold clear water emerging from fist-sized holes in the limestone, was reached just before dark. After this point, it was boulder hopping and walking up the dry limestone bedrock still following the scent of smoke.

At one or our many rest stops, Roger appeared and told us it was just a little way up to base camp. I found that "a little way" could be relative to "just spitting distance" or "as the crow flies," when dealing with Roger's directions thus far!

I knew I was close to French Horn Cave and camp, when I came upon a large limestone cliff face with a dark cave arch some 30 feet wide and 15 feet high, and could see the glow of a small fire near by. Al McLane volunteered to walk back downstream and look for Don and Neils, while Jim, Dick, Seth and I unloaded our packs and picked out a sleeping site. About the time we untied and removed all our gear from our packs, lightning flashed over our heads and the wind suddenly came up, blowing hard with drops of rain.

While standing by the fire wondering how Don and Neils were enjoying the light show, Mark Fritzke appeared out of the night, walked over to me and in a very quiet voice, said "How are you Arley?" Mark had started walking in from the trailhead about five in the evening, just about the time the tail of the party was walking off into French Creek canyon. What a shock to see Mark in the middle of the night, walk in and find us in the bottom of this rugged canyon!

Al returned just after Mark walked in, and said he came across Don and Neils about a mile downstream. They were camped, where they hit the creek, for the night. They told Al that they would not come up to the base camp at French Horn Cave, and that they would walk downstream and out in the morning.

About midnight, after getting under shelter for the night in one of the cave entrances, Jim and I decided to visit French Horn Cave on our own. The cave turned out to be worth the hard trek in. It had moderately decorated passages, some tight crawls in the side passages, and the nice surprise of some unexplored passage blowing air at the bottom of the cave. A complete survey was planned for the next morning. Jim and I emerged from the cave about 2:30 a.m. and decided to get some sleep.

### **THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A TRIP TO FRENCH CREEK (continued)**

In the morning, Jim and I decided to pack up and walk out. We discovered a bald ridge that would take us to the trail out. It took us six hours to get back to the car.

After we looked at what we went through to get to French Horn Cave, it was a good two weeks before we would admit that we would, some day, return to explore the rest of the limestone of French Creek. A word of caution: if you think you would like to take a trip to French Creek, first and foremost, evaluate your physical condition and do not attempt this trip unless you are in at least good shape.

The Klamath River country, of which French Horn Cave is a part, is steep, brushy, hot and without many improved trails. Distance is misleading, with canyon to canyon crossing taking hours of valuable daylight. South-facing slopes tend to be very brushy and hot. Take north or tree covered slopes, where brush cannot compete with the shade of the heavy timber. Last, but not least, carry as much water as you are able. In the late spring and summer months only major canyons have running creeks. Good luck, you'll need it for a trip to French Creek!

### **BOBCAT AND ROOTY TOOTY CAVES UNHARMED** by Jim Wolff

On June 11th, following the June SAG meeting, a post-logging inspection was conducted of the Caves involved with the recently logged land that overlies the passages of the Spider-Moth Annex of Bobcat and Rooty Tooty Cave. Those involved were Don Quinton and nephew Tim, Jim Wolff and son Matt.

The caves appeared to be not damaged from the logging, and although the harvest activity got close in places, no slash fell into or even close to the entrances.

A letter was drafted and sent to the McCloud District Ranger of the Forest Service on June 21st to commend him and his sale administrators for their fast and full cooperation. In turn, I offered our full cooperation (naturally) in the future with their cave inventory. Why not?

### **PORCUPINE BUTTE LAVA TUBE MAPPED** by Jim Wolff

On June 11th, while one small group was over at the Powder Hill Cave system, Roger Jones and Liz Wolff mapped 3,013.5 feet in newly discovered Porcupine Butte lava tube. Leads remain and some known passages haven't been mapped yet.

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