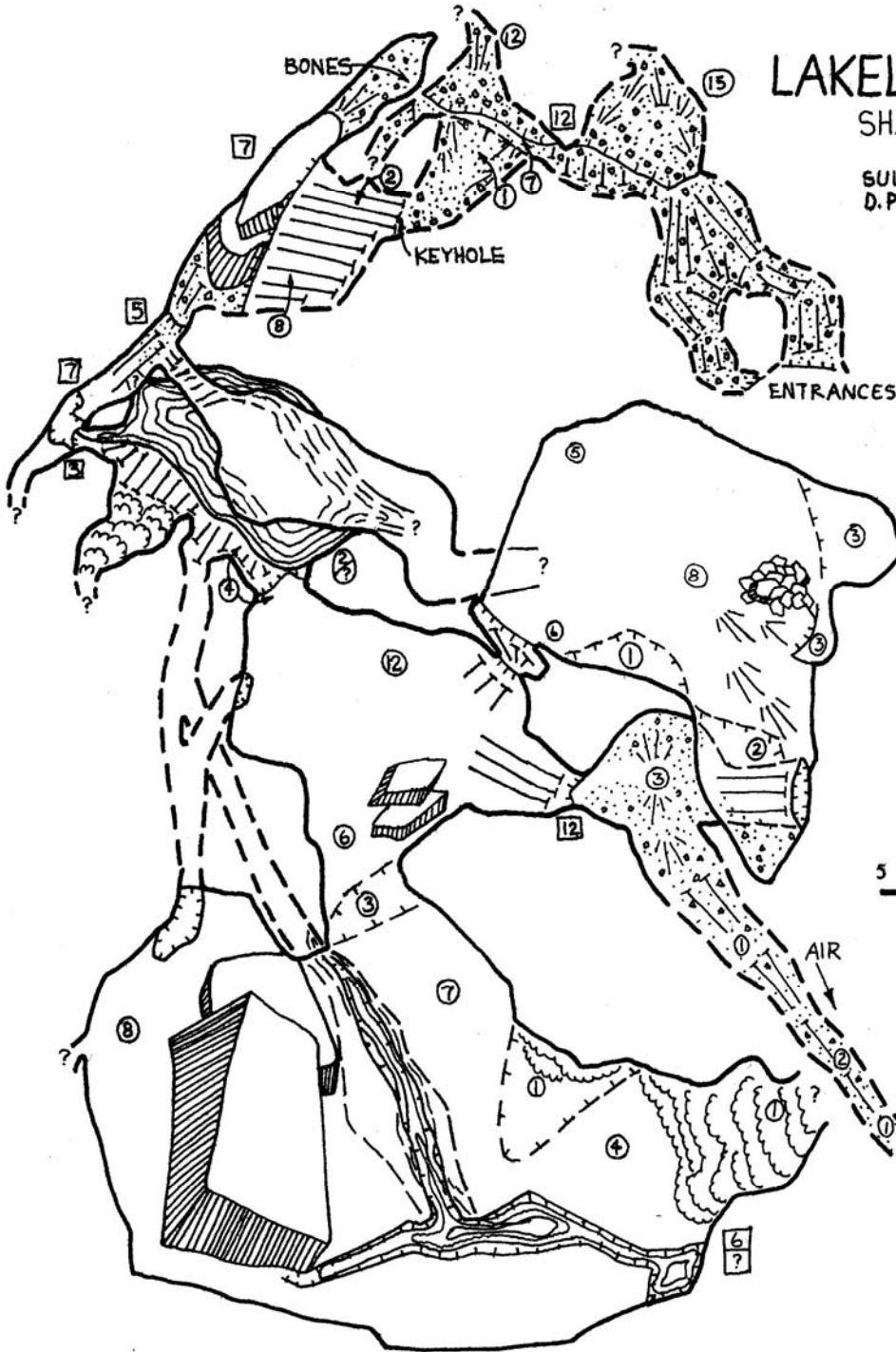




# SAG RAG

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## LAKELEVEL CAVE SHASTA COUNTY, CA

SUUNTOS & TAPE SURVEY BY:  
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©LW 10-84



Map: Lakelevel Cave

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Shasta Area Grotto meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Friday of each month. Grotto annual dues, including subscription, are \$4.00 per individual and \$6.00 family. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter.

### COMING EVENTS

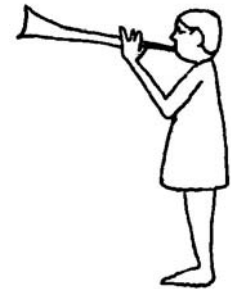
- December 14 Grotto elections. Nominations may be made either in person or by mail. At Wolff's in McCloud. Bring goodies for a party. Caving next day McCloud limestone, or if inaccessible, Riley's Cave, Shasta Lake.
- January 11 Election of Officers. Wolff's in McCloud.
- February 8 Grotto meeting at Wolff's. (Aren't you getting tired of meeting in McCloud? Want to host a meeting?)
- February 16-18 Western Regional Educational Seminar. Santa Cruz, CA.

SAG RAG Editor Retires – Claude Smith retired as the editor of the SAG RAG in October. Claude put lots of time and effort into putting out a quality paper on his home computer. Thanks a lot Claude.



### HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

Have you got writing skills? Do you have a yen to see your name in print? Nothing to do to fill those long winter evenings? Then here's a job for you! Six times a year your literary skills will be required of you when YOU become the new editor of the SAG RAG! Inquire at P.O. Box 865 McCloud, CA 96057.



At the Meeting – Jim Wolff proposed inventorying the caves on the Shasta-Trinity N.F. for the USFS. Jim proposed a program of cave awareness to the ranger of the McCloud District and had his proposition accepted. The NSS and BLM already have an agreement on caves. Can we get something similar here?

Elections coming up. Those eligible to serve and vote are:

Glen Everest	Arley Kisling	Mary Belle Smith
Tom Hesseldenz	Steve Knutson	Neils Smith
Al Henderson	Dick LaForge	Mark Stoute
Phylis Henderson	Joe Molter	Jim Wolff
Norm Jenkins	Don Quinton	Liz Wolff
Roger Jones	Claude Smith	

Want to make our winter (and summer) meetings more interesting? The NSS has a slide show and movie library that includes individual caves, area overviews, conventions, and educational subjects. How about a grotto photo contest? Guest speakers? Or mini educational seminars?

Welcome to new members Al and Phylis Henderson of Red Bluff. Their phone number is 527-7513. Call them up if you're going caving, they're game for most anything except vertical caves.

CAUTIOUS CAVER SEZ: Wet carbide in pack go BOOM!!

## TENTH ANNUAL SPELEOCAMP – MARBLE MTNS. SEPTEMBER 1984

Seems as though all our grotto meetings held in the Marbles never get off the ground! You just end up UNDERground! Although it was a pretty good turnout from the “regulars” of the grotto: Jim and Liz Wolff, Dick LaForge, Roger (always faithful) Jones, Glen Everest (complete with fishing pole), Steve Knutson (Cap’n Speleo), and new grotto members Al and Phylis Henderson.

On Wednesday it was dark and threatening, looked like rain. So instead of sleeping at the trailhead that night, we stayed home – had a good home cooked meal and our own cozy beds, smart eh? As it turned out it did rain, and just enough to wet the trail down. So Thursday early we left for the Marbles. We were on the trail and to the Marble Valley cabin by 1 PM.

When we arrived Roger was busy mapping. He and others mapped 218 feet in a small cave he found just above and south of the cabin. He also took a “huge” group into Upstairs-Downstairs Cave. A new area just below the main entrance was mapped on the way out.

I went with Mike Sims and Vern Smith to a cave that just opened up this year. The entrance is just 60’ or so from the main entrance to Brokedown Palace. The hole had quite a bit of air coming out of it. The cave has a 20’ freeclimbable drop, altho I’d recommend a rope. The bottom is a steep slope following a slot to a breakdown plug in the southern wall. Under one wall is a breakdown slope against the continuation of the main entrance slot. Mike chose to pursue the wind, but then chose to retreat as things got too shaky and narrow. It’s passable, but the climb would be very grim. A person would have to muscle themselves out on arm strength alone. This new blowing hole must be taking air from Brokedown Palace, just 40 or so feet away??

Speleocamp had been in progress for over a week already when we got there. Dave Cowan, Dave Walker, Scott Linn, “Cap’n Speleo” and others had done some mopping up in Little Marble Valley and Black Mtn. caves, but special emphasis was put on reaching the 10 mile mark in Bigfoot cave, for the 10th anniversary of the KMCTF. A lot of work had been put into the Meatgrinder and Wounded Knee areas of the cave. Hopes were big on reaching that goal by the end of the week! After many trips they were within 1700’ or less of the magic 10 mile mark. Congratulations KMCTF on the fine work that has been done this decade!!

### LAKELEVEL CAVE August 11, 1984 by Liz Wolff

One way not to hold a grotto meeting is under a busy train trestle. Which is how we tried to hold the August meeting and sleep that night. On Saturday we began the day at 5 AM with another train. Everyone present – Glen and Bernice Everest, Don, Audra, and Noah Quinton, The Smith family with friend Dave Priest, and the Wolff family were ready to go by 7 AM! Boarding the patio boat, we sailed off into the sunrise and finally reached our destination on Backbone Ridge. Some of us scrambled into cave clothes (and some into swimsuits) to climb just above the high tide line to the cave. This is one convenient cave at Shasta Lake. The cave is dusty dry in the upper entrance area, then someone directs you to go **that** way when the obvious way is **that** way. But you get down and slide through the horizontal slot and come to the contortionist’s keyhole, down a short slope, and chimney to a steeply sloping breakdown and mud slope. At the bottom of this is a U-turn through a 12” slot, down a raspy 3’ drop to a slick flowstone slope, complete with a bottomless pool. Passing the pool we came up into a room with about 30 bats and some helictites. The obvious continuation led into a room with lots of pretties and a partially water-filled crack in the floor. Glen and Don found a way into the crack and explored while everyone else poked around in the room and into all the cracks in the walls. Lots of photos and poking-into-holes later an upper level was entered and 2 Shasta Salamanders (an endangered species, unique to the McCloud Formation of limestone) were found and photographed. On the way out of the cave Jim, Claude, and Dave surveyed and found that we could have come out the obvious way above the horizontal slot!

**1984 WESTERN REGIONAL, LAVA BEDS NAT'L MON., September 1984**

This trip started out as many others do – loading the car (poor car) to the ceiling, with the overflow in the back seat with the kids (poor kids). This trip we had Ben Rust (ex-Oregon Grotto, etc.) with us, so more stuff and more people ... We were really loaded. Upon arrival at the Lava Beds, after going the scenic route around Glass Mtn. and Medicine Lake, we registered and set up camp in a campground designed for about 30 tents that was full to overflowing, but you know cavers.

All kinda trips were discussed over lunch. Jim and the kids (along with every other kid in camp and some more adults) decided to go out to the Fleener Chimneys with a large supply of garbage bags to do the obvious and necessary. Ben and I and ten or so others, including Roger J., Don Q., Neils S., and prospective grotto members Al and Phylis Henderson, 4 crowbars, 100' (or so) of heavy-duty chain and a come-along walked out to Post Office Cave to see if we couldn't remove the boulder from the entrance. After much poking, prodding, prying, and advice (disregarded) from the unsilent watchers, the entrance was opened and the sides of the sink groomed of any size hazardous rock. All by 5 PM!

Over campfires that night much visiting was done. Drinks drunk, songs sung, lies swapped and acquaintances renewed. The guy who traveled furthest was from North (South?) Carolina.

The next morning indecision set in. It turned out that I went to Post Office Cave with Roger and the Hendersons to see just what it was we had rescued from the rockpile. Kids and Ben went desert wild, while Jim, Neils, and Don went to find a cave reputed to be there and left leaving its reputation intact.

At the Western Regional once-a-yearly business meeting a new conservation chairperson was provisionally (temporarily) appointed, John De Boer was elected King, a joint regional for Labor Day weekend with the Northwest Region was approved for 1985, and an auction of incredible stuff topped off the meeting. A slide show for the Park Service followed. Then we had to come home.

**Star Peak Caves, October 13 & 14** by Phylis Henderson and Jim Wolff

In connection with the October grotto meeting a trip was planned to some of the caves on Star Peak, north of Lovelock, Nevada. The trip had been arranged by Don Quinton, with invaluable "guide service" by Tom Tyler of Reno.

After some minor difficulties and delays, the group left Don and Audra's home in Herlong at approximately 8 AM, of the 13th. At this point the group included Norm Jenkins, Don, Claude Smith, Neils Smith, Jim, Phylis and Al Henderson. Following a quick trip to Reno (speed seldom exceeded 75 mph) where a stop was made to buy food and gasoline, everyone headed for Lovelock at about 9:15 AM. Tom Tyler, Great Basin Grotto member, joined the group at this time.

From Lovelock the route led through the mountains, where considerable mining was taking place, up the east side of the range to a canyon near the base of Star Peak. By 1 PM we were at the start of a steep, rough road leading up the mountain. Don and Tom assured everyone that, while appearing to be bad, it was an excellent road that would take us to a good camp location near the cave sites. This soon proved to be a somewhat overly optimistic assessment of the situation. However, after some difficulties with many starts and restarts, the entire group and most of their equipment reached the chosen camp area. This turned out to be a barren saddle, high on one of the ridges running down the east side of Star Peak. The elevation was close to 9000'. Snow was very close on the surrounding peaks, and there was a strong wind blowing, and it was cold. VERY COLD!

The wind made it impossible to have a fire and difficult to pitch tents. At that time, Claude decided that he didn't want to leave his vehicle further down the mountain where it had been necessary to park it earlier. Al and I took him back down and he returned to Herlong.

## Star Peak, cont'd.

By the time we had returned to "camp," which was about 3:10 PM, a unanimous decision had been reached that it would be best to wait until the following day to proceed.

Since it was too windy for a fire, it was necessary to "cook" inside the vehicles, with hot buttered rum being one of the first courses. The wind blew most of the night, sometimes very hard. By the next morning, it had subsided enough to build a small, but ineffective fire, which soon had to be put out. By about 9 AM, the tents and equipment had been repacked and the party was straggling up the hill.

The first cave was reached around 9:30 and turned out to be Bell Cave.

**Jim:** The cave is very large, huge by our standards, with a large room 70' wide X 50' high X about 125' long. At the back of the cave there is a display of dogtooth spar crystals. On the way out of the cave, 20' past the big room there was a deep pit we didn't check. Don crawled down to an overlook near the top of the pit, bell-shaped and about 100' deep. Near the entrance there are a series of climb-ups around wedged boulders, which gave some of us difficulty. This canyon was by-passed by some by working along a ledge. We spent over two hours in there, so with another change of carbide we went directly to our next cave, only sixty feet away.

**Phylis:** At least one very interesting pit was not checked. After the group emerged near 1 PM Neils and I returned to the "camp" to test the brandy for flavor retention and other properties. The remainder of the party then went on to explore a second nearby cave.

**Jim:** Yes, we almost walked or climbed by the entrance without seeing it! Starts out as a narrow 4' tall fissure that wound down to a 12-15' drop, nearly climbable, but we rigged a cable ladder there. After awhile it was necessary to stuff oneself into the last room where a pit awaited us. Tom wanted to check it out, so after finally finding a natural anchor to tie the rope to, Tom, then myself, rappelled to the floor – a blind pit with no leads. It would be interesting to know just how close to Bell Cave we were at that point. It was a good day of caving.

**Phylis:** Everyone had returned to the vehicles by 3:50 PM and at 4:05 we were heading back down the mountain, with Don leading the way. We made a much faster trip down than up. He must have acquired more confidence or had poor brakes.

Overall it was a very interesting, and worthwhile, trip, especially to the more inexperienced members of the group. Don and Tom, who organized the trip, should be thanked for their efforts, but also warned that if they arrange any others, they will have to do a much better job on the weather – or ELSE!!!!?

**Battle Creek 2 Cave, September 22, 1984** by Jim Wolff  
[Wellhella Cave]

It all started when Roger Jones showed up one Friday night and wanted to go caving. I had been itching to go do two pits near the entrance of Battle Creek 2 Cave (BC2). A few years ago I had taken Rick Pope and Becky Taylor (Oregon Grotto) to see the cave and Becky free-climbed into one of the pits and saw the cave go out of sight. A rope was needed due to the mud. So our objective was simple, to explore and try to map the pits.

Passing gear through the bottleneck, at 11:30 PM, moved to "Becky's climb". The pit starts out as a 3' diameter tube, dropping free for 20' to the top of a steep clay slope. On the rope I found a small opening covered by a mud sill. I kicked and "KERSPLASH!!" the sill gave way to expose an 8-10' deep, 5' wide crack going off. And everything is covered with MUD! I wasn't about to rappel into the water but I was able to view part of the passage and see it continue in two directions.

Rejoining Roger at the top we moved over to the other pit, and Roger took his turn, sliding down a tight corkscrew to a mud floor 20' below. One very small, muddy hole led off – no go.

We visited parts of the Big Room, and found 10' of water in Frog Pit. We were out of the cave by 4:30 AM.

### **Trip Leader Qualities** by Jim Wolff

There is more involved in being a trip leader than saying "Let's go caving!" and going off to the caves. It doesn't matter if there are only two people on the trip, one must be the leader. One person must accept the responsibility for the safety of each person, the course of exploration, and ultimately the results of the trip. The trip leader should be the most experienced caver on the team. This person should know the caving area, the cave, and the equipment needed to explore it. The trip leader should know their own personal abilities and limitations as well as the same of each participant. The trip should be limited to the abilities of the weakest member on the trip. Everyone on a cave trip should act as a team, literally, in complete communication with each other, watching over each other, checking each other's vertical rigging, passing gear, and watching for hazards, and lending a hand where needed. Each member is an element and valuable part of the team.

Let's look at some good qualities of the trip leader. He must be able to listen to suggestions of others and act on them if possible; resourceful and imaginative in surmounting obstacles; able to assert himself to prevent foolish injuries; able to evaluate the condition and abilities of the caving team. He must be a mentally mature individual and be experienced enough to weigh all options and conditions and turn around when necessary. When weighing the issues of life and death, it is better to turn tail than risk injury – or worse!

In my own experience the trip leader's position is assumed unconsciously by one person and everyone on that trip cooperated with that leader. I can see that some trips were fiascos, but luckily there were no fatalities. However, one cannot afford a fatality to gain the necessary insights to improve on leadership qualities.

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NEWS DATED MATERIAL

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Page 1	Lakelevel Cave map
Page 2	Coming events; Editor needed; Meeting notes
Page 3	Tenth Annual Speleocamp – by J. Wolff
Page 3	Lakelevel Cave – by L. Wolff
Page 4	1984 Western Regional – by J. Wolff
Page 4	Star Peak caves – by P. Henderson and J. Wolff
Page 6	Trip leader qualities – by J. Wolff