

sag rag

34:5 Sept-Oct 2015



In the mountains there are Expansive places where you can look out and see who's coming, places ringing with freedom and excitement, which are essential to the spirit. In perfection, these are summits - places of prospect. Mountains also provide refuges in sheltered valleys - places turned inward and enclosed - and they meet a need of the body. The ultimate refuge is the cave. Tim Palmer 1988.

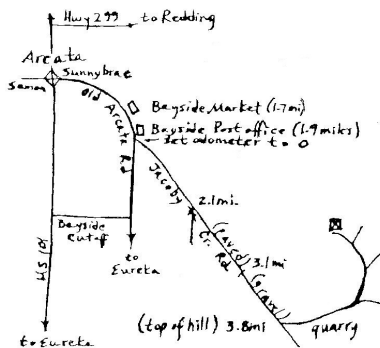
INSIDE: NSS Convention 2014! Railroad Tunnel, and bat walk .

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at different locations on 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 or <caverbill@live.com>. For more on SAG, check the web site at <<http://www.caves.org/grotto/sag>>.

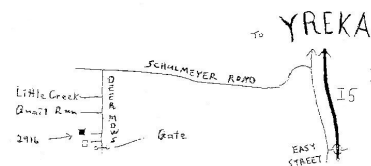
CAVER CALENDAR 2015

- Oct. 31 SAG Meeting 7:30 pm at Fritzke's in Arcata.
 Nov 26-29 CRF at LABE.
 Dec 18 SAG Meeting 7:30 pm at Broeckels' in Yreka.
 July 17-23, 2016 NSS Convention, Ely NV!!

Maps to Meetings



October



November/December

SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

I was cleaning out my e-mails and found a great article submitted by Ernie Coffman, about the Huntsville AL NSS Convention in 2014. Well, better late than never, but sorry about that Ernie. Please do use this as inspiration to attend next summer's NSS Convention in Ely, NV. Just head east from Reno and follow the loneliest road to another great western convocation of cavers. Also waiting, not quite as long, is the Railroad Tunnel hike report from Liz Wolff and Doug Viner. This is a rare RAG without a new cave map, but stuff happens. Liz tops the dry end of summer with a report from the yearly public outreach bat walk through Barnum Cave. Thanks to Dave Smith and others for help with photos, and thanks to all the contributors doing good things to keep the newsletter going, despite the brain dead editor.

BB

August 27, 2015 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:40pm. at the home of Jim & Liz Wolff. Present were Sam Baxter, Bill Broeckel, Steve Hobson, Barbara Stufflebeam, Jim & Liz Wolff.

Minutes: The minutes of the July meeting were accepted as published in the SAG RAG.

Treasurer's Report: The treasury has a balance of \$936.

SAG RAG Report: The next SAG RAG is due out soon, Bill has enough articles for it.

Website and E-RAG: The website is doing well and an e-RAG was just sent out.

Correspondence: From the NSS on a Bat Day challenge October 31, 2015 to build bat houses. Emails to and from Sam Cuenca and Ray Miller following the August 19 evening bat walk sponsored by the FS and Fish & Wildlife Service on the bats found in Barnum Cave that evening. It is most likely a maternity colony hanging out outside the gate. The Barnum gate will be repaired this fall sometime after bats leave.

Old Business: For the October 10 SAG/SAR cave rescue exercise we will use Adam's Homestead Cave and work together with the SAR people as the exercise will involve a vertical lift. SAR has changed leadership, Celeste Fowler has stepped down and Ryan Welch is now leading.

New Business: Dallas Carlon has asked to host a meeting at his home in Redding; provisionally January.

A Redding area Boy Scout troop leader approached Barbara Stufflebeam and has asked to go caving in October. There are several questions that need to be answered: date, how many boys, do they have caving gear, what kind of caving do they want to do, if it's a merit badge what will be required for that. We discussed going to Pallet Ice, Deep Ice and aMazing Pits caves for the Scouts. If conservation is a part of it, take them to Pluto's Cave for a cleanup. Barbara will get answers to all our questions.

Saturday Sept 5 will be a trip to one of the nearby caves & Tuesday September 15 there will be a trip to Lakelevel Cave, contact Steve Hobson for both. Oct 3-5 Paul Gibson survey trip contact Joel Despain.

Steve would like to see a "tribute to Melanie" issue of the RAG; Barbara suggested after she is back.

Calendar / Events: one change - the Oct 23 meeting is changed to Oct 31 at Mark Fritzke's on the coast.

Trip Reports:

During his 500 mile PCT hike Mike Stufflebeam looked into a couple of Marble Mtn caves. While hiking the Hat Creek rim two weeks ago Mike & Barbara saw people at Garbage Pit dumping stuff. Sam Baxter and his friend Jim Gaedert went to Windy Cave and saw two bats. Bill Broeckel hiked on the Giant Crater flow to vent #3 and found five caves. Ray Miller and Liz Wolff went to Barnum Cave for the FS/FWS bat walk and cave trip; a maternity colony of big-eared bats was found. **LW**

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An Adventure into TAG Country

My adventure this year, for the annual NSS Convention, began at 0600, on Thursday, the 10th of July, with lift-off from the Medford Airport in Oregon. A great flight from there to Denver and then from there, another flight to Huntsville, Alabama — the heart of TAG country. Landing was great and finding my luggage was easy. Waiting around for my buddy, Ron Carlson, from Connecticut was a snap, so he gathered his luggage and while he waited with our gear, I went and checked in with Budget for our rental for the nine days that we were going to be there. They had me down for a Chevy Cobalt, but ended up with a Kia Soul, which was really neat...for several reasons, which I'll explain as I go along.

Took my GPS and after turning to a different state, we drove right to our motel for our stay. We found right off that the weather was hot and muggy, but that was going to change over the time we were in Alabama — usually does during an NSS Convention, right? We registered and were directed to our room, on the 4th floor, finding nice accommodations. After getting settled in, we asked at Registration where a good place to eat was located and we found a great restaurant right across the main drag, so that worked out well. Back to the motel and settled in for the evening, discussing what we would do in the morning.

After a great sleep, we dressed and wandered down to our breakfast; and, afterward, we drove to the old NSS Headquarters on Cave Avenue. Found a couple of people there, including Dave and Karen Irving, from San Diego; Michelle Vaughn of the NSS Office and who lives in Huntsville. And, before we could say anything, several others showed up, including John Woods of Southern California Grotto, and we were told that all of the boxes full of program guides and the infamous convention guidebook needed to be taken over to the high school, so...that was our beginning of a long weekend of volunteering for the convention. Ron and I placed our backseats down, rearranged our gear and filled up the back of the Soul. Then, we helped load up trucks and other cars with filling them, until the office was empty.

We were supposed to caravan over to the high school, since some of us didn't know where it was, but by the time we got backed-up and ready to go, everyone had split the scene; thus, I plugged in "Lee High School" and away we went, also. As we arrived, the books were being brought into the high school, so we waited our turn, and before you know it, our Soul was empty, also. We stashed the books in the hallway, near the foyer, for that was where registration and pre-registration were going to be, according to Michelle. Not! We arranged the tables how we thought it would be best; and, immediately found the foyer to be too small, as there were only two tables set aside for pre-registered folks, but they had five tables for registration. Ron and I were going to work at pre-registration the next day and then Sunday and part of Monday, so we saw some hiccups right off the bat. Both of us had worked pre-registration at the West Virginia convention, so some hiccups right away. We tried convincing Michelle that it didn't make a lot of sense the way it was set-up, all to no avail. Then, one of the other Alabama ladies got involved and she said let's move the materials into the computer lab, just down the hall and see how that goes. Oh, woe! That didn't make for a happy camper, but... it worked out well in the long run. It would not have worked well, at all, if we wouldn't have made the change. Thus, the changes left registration to do their thing with the computers, etc. and the extra tables were used for a computer that anyone could use for finding out info, etc. We even opened up registration and pre-registration early, with everything going quite smoothly. We had a lot of positive comments, so sometimes it just takes a little thinking and previous experiences to make things work out. Yea!

Monday, we finished our assignments and then left for working the vertical contests in the gym. We had been so busy, we didn't have a lay of the school, yet, so...wandered around the hallways and found why it was noted as two schools within this one huge school. Quite a building and only three years young. If that doesn't make much sense, they had two principals, two vice-principals or was that three of each? Two administrative secretaries, two of everything. Really and truly! The only thing they didn't have was two cafeterias.

We found the large gym—there was another smaller one close by—and met up with Bill Cuddington and his wife, Marianne; along with a number of others in the Vertical Section. Bill had already climbed and set his record for the week. Like we say, "Get it over with and rest for the rest of the week." For the next couple

continued

of days, we had about fifty participants with seven records being achieved and one of them was a young man, who was just twelve years of age. When the awards were given out at the lunch hour on Friday, you never found a boy who was so proud when Bill called him up to receive a hung of almost new PMI rope. And, on top of that, his mother was called up to receive her certificate and another prize. All in all, the contest went quite well and quite smoothly.

Wednesday, we went to the Congress of Grottos meeting, to represent Shasta Area Grotto, along with the Mother Lode Grotto, but Jim Lakner had beat me to it. He, also, had picked up the cards for Diablo and I'm not sure whether he had SFBC in his hands or not, although I know Peri Frantz came in, so she might have been representing SFBC — that used to be my first grotto...way back when. The meeting was opened by Chairman Bill Stringfellow, with us looking at the minutes from the previous meeting, on August 8th of 2013, which was held in Pennsylvania. After looking the minutes over, it moved that they be approved and then we went into items on the agenda page. A few comments were made, but the one that got Bill was when I suggested that we use the more modern term "Unfinished Business," as "Old Business" had been out of fashion for about ten years, using Robert's Rules of Order. Thus, he tried using the new term, but faltered one time, as we continued business. The only item that we discussed, with a lot of folks putting in their thoughts, was a motion by Team Poseidon on Board of Governors meeting for a prescribed length of time, in their tenure. After this, without any other items on the agenda, elections were held, with the same two officers being voted in, again. A true "railroad job!" After that was the Fellows-New Members gathering in the new headquarters banquet room, which will hold up to 600 or so; and, then....

We wandered around for another session or two, and then met up with a former college roommate of Ron's, and went out for dinner at a Mexican restaurant. The next day, we went back to the gym, where we were instructing or working on ropes, for the Vertical Workshop, which is held annually. We had twenty-three students that were divided up in five teams, although seven students had missed out on this great workshop. After the class was over, we took down all the ropes, gathered up all the gear, as well as wrapped up the wrestling mats and left the gym in a very clean order; and then drove downtown to the Von Braun Theater to see the first viewing of the photo salon. We were really taken back by this huge, beautiful theater, and had fantastic seating for viewing the great slides and other entries in other categories. We were in the same row as Dave Bunnell and his wife, who happened to be one of the models, along with Eileen Belan, in Dave's Mercer Caverns new brochure. Afterward, the three of us went out for dinner, again, but this time to a great steak and fish restaurant, called "The Longhorn."

Friday, we were scheduled to do some of the sessions, including the BOG, but it was raining like crazy, so we opted to drive over to a town, called Decatur, which was west of Huntsville, and was known for its historical areas and business. As we approached Decatur, though, all we found were large, modern buildings that were for sale, i.e., several banks, etc. Couldn't get over that! Finally we spotted a sign that had "Historical" on it, so we went there and found several streets with beautiful homes that went back to the 1800s and early 1900s. Even though it was raining, I had to get out and capture some of the beauty of this area. That evening we met up with Bruce at the campground, again, and drove to the Von Braun Center, for our annual Awards Banquet, but it was held in a different part of the center, like other venues — ice arena, basketball court, etc. This was one huge center and I don't believe we have anything in the State of Oregon that would match it for its beauty and size. Of course, we didn't have all of the aerospace scientists working, as they did in Huntsville, either. Back to the campground; and, then back to our room for a few hours of shut-eye before we were on the road, again. Drove Ron to the airport, so he could check in at 0500 for his plane was scheduled to depart at 0545. And, now, what to do for my flight wasn't scheduled to leave until 1201. First off, I drove around the area, near the airport, looking for a gas station, knowing that none of them would be open. Finally found Walmart, where I saw there was a gas station, but I thought I'd try and get a few minutes of shut-eye. Ha! I tried and tried, but finally gave up and went in and filled up the tank. Noticed a Waffle House across the street, so drove over there and then over to the airport. Needless to say, I didn't shave many minutes off of my six-plus hours, so after checking in the Soul, I headed into the baggage area and sat, reading and reading. After a while, I finally was able to check my huge suitcase in, after I punched the bell on the counter. It was good to get rid of that and now I could wander upstairs and see what was happening.

continued

I saw Vance Nelson from the Southern California Grotto going up the escalator, so caught up with him upstairs, and we wandered through to a seating area; and, lo and behold, there was Dick Mitchell and his wife, Lynn. They were headed back to Colorado, so the four of us chatted for a while and then the three of them were getting ready to board the plane to Denver, so I said my goodbye and wandered down to my area of departure. And, that is my Adventure into TAG Country and I'm going to stick to it. From what I can tell, I was the only caver from Oregon. There was a better count for California, what with the Beaches, the Browns, the Lakners, Ken Laidlaw, Richard Breisch, Howard Hurtt, the Frantz's, Gail McCoy, Carol Vesley, Betty and Dan from Southern California Grotto, Robert and Lala Darrah, who I didn't see, and the Irving's, plus there were others that I didn't see. The west had a good showing for a convention that was this far away. It was a great convention and a beautiful setting for having one; thus, the theme of "Welcome Home" was quite appropriate!

As for our new NSS Headquarters, where we had a party every night, those involved in getting this site, which is huge, and even with several caves on it, they couldn't have done any better. It's a tremendous site for having the NSS Headquarters and the volunteers who are modernizing the building, have done an outstanding job. If you weren't "motel ling" it, you were camping and/or "RVing" it, and they were able to hold all of the campers with ease. The building is fantastic, with the headquarters, library, book sales, and a great huge room for entertainment. They've already booked weddings, reunions, etc., but still would like donations to come in, so they can pay off the mortgage earlier than what is scheduled, so if you feel it in your heart, join up with the 404 group, which will take a minimum of five bucks per month; donate any amount; or sign up for any of the other suggestions that you received this past month from the NSS. Getting the grotto to submit a donation has been suggested, also. Every nickel and dime counts for speeding up the mortgage burning.

Ernie Coffman, 8316 LF

EC



Trip report: CORP Railroad Tunnel Hike

Liz Wolff and Doug Viner

This was SAG's second trip exploring the railroad tunnels of the historic and somewhat unusual Central Oregon and Pacific (CORP) Railroad route across the Siskiyou Summit.



The route was opened in 1887, completing the first rail line up and down the West Coast; however, the steep, unrelenting grade, combined with very tight curves, made the route difficult and led to it being bypassed by the "Natron Cutoff" in 1927.¹ In modern times, only freight has been hauled over the summit, but deteriorating conditions were such that the last paid haul over this section happened in April 2008. Today, southbound shipments from the mills in the Medford area are routed perhaps 100 miles *north* to Eugene before returning south via the Natron Cutoff and Klamath Falls on the modern main line. But soon – later this year, we're told – the "up & over" route will be reopened, the result of a \$9.5

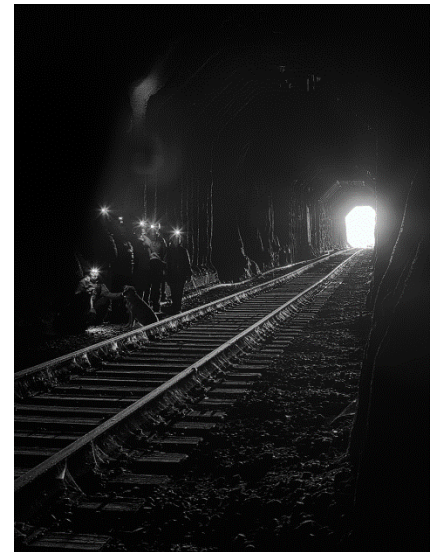
million project which is rehabilitating "about 65 miles of the corridor including rails and ties, minor repairs to 32 bridges and a tunnel – Tunnel 14."² That will provide a viable alternative to the long rail detour or the option of sending the freight by truck (at a rate of ~3.5 trucks per rail car), but it will also make future touring of these tunnels a bit dicey.

On our first trip, back on 03 Dec 2011, we toured Tunnel 13 which was brought to international fame when three young brothers thoroughly bungled a train robbery – their first & only – that killed three trainmen and set off an international manhunt that lasted more than three years, cost more than \$500 000 (6.5 million in today's dollars), and involved the printing of more than two million "wanted" posters. It was one of the last major train robberies in the United States. See the Sag Rag Vol 31, #2 for that story.

Tunnel 13 itself is 3111 feet long (0.6 miles, or nearly a kilometer). In 2003, a major fire burned the wood-timbered tunnel so badly that it partially collapsed, leaving a void 50 feet high that "daylighted" to the surface above.

For the past several years it's been patiently awaiting the return of freight trains, scheduled to return late this year.

Upper (north) end of Tunnel 13 in 2011 →



Our hike this year had three objectives: (1) share some more details from forensic science, a science truly born from the desire to identify the culprits of this robbery/homicide; (2) tour

¹ In 1927, the main line was rerouted through Klamath Falls. Although that route, the "Natron Cutoff," tackles an extremely long, constant grade – one of the longest in the U.S. – as the rail descends some 4000 feet from near the Willamette Pass to Natron (near Eugene), it is significantly less steep and its comparatively gentle and less numerous curves aren't nearly as problematic. Today, trains still routinely pull themselves from Natron uphill over the Cascades route with little extra trouble, but trains over the Siskiyou Summit are limited by the physics of the grade and curves to approximately 30 cars – and even this requires several locomotives.

² Oregon Department of Transportation, "Improvements Begin to Reopen Siskiyou Rail Line," <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION3/Pages/TIGER.aspx>

Tunnel 14; and (3) cross the Wall Creek Trestle, one of the only remaining high trestles on the route. Those who braved the predicted thunderstorms and rain on Sunday 12 July were Sam Baxter and his friend Jim, Doug & Tabitha Viner and friends Rich & Cheryl Ugland and her brother Mike, Joel Despain, Heather Veerkamp and her son Liam, and Jim & Liz Wolff.

We met at Callahan's near the Siskiyou summit then carpoled to the start point of the hike, where the intrepid group immediately split into two parties taking different trails (or near to non-trails) up the 40-or-so feet to the CORP rail tracks. This road is in the process of becoming an active rail line after having been shut down for many years. We found active work sites in & around Tunnel 14, with heavy equipment, piles of rock and ties and two previously unknown "cabins" complete with power supply.

The hike began around 1230 pm and concluded around 1600 (for you military types) or 4pm, real-time. After the scramble up the decomposing granite hill, or the switchback trail through the trees, the group set off without Joel. This was just a foretaste of how the day would go. We stopped and waited a bit for him and then set off, all together. Tunnel 15, set into a steep slope, is just 258 feet (79 m) long. It dodges briefly under the rail line itself which, having reversed direction in Tunnel 14, here lies directly above. It is straight and no lights are needed for that one. It was in good repair and easily traversed. Shortly after Tunnel 15, a "road" led up the hill toward the other tunnels, and sported a cabin made of ties. This access road shortcuts both ends of Tunnel 14 near another cabin.



Tunnel 14 is a horseshoe-shaped, 1192 feet long (0.22 mi, 360 m) bore, much of which is on a very tight, 14° curve. (Note to self: If you want to build a successful railroad line, try to avoid tight curves and steep grades. Best avoid mountains entirely.) It had, until recently, been in poor shape: Due to age and deteriorated drainage in the tunnel, the bottom of many of the timbers that shored up some of the roof had begun to rot. Moreover, some of the timber sets had "sagged locally and many individual sets [had] erratically collapsed into the tunnel over time."³ The total cost of repairing this one tunnel

for a 20 year design life was estimated at \$2.6 million.

As we approached Tunnel 14 we saw large machinery and rails all askew. The rail bed had been leveled and packed down with good drainage provided underneath the rock. It curved around to the left, making a switchback underground. Lights were required for this one. Some traversed it both ways, a couple of times. After exiting the tunnel, the group broke up into those wanting to hike or drive up to Tunnel 13, the site of the infamous train-robbery-gone-awry. Sam, Jim, and the Despain party departed in different directions for Tunnel 13.



³ "Oregon Rail Study Appendix C, Oregon Rail Tunnel Assessment: Double – Stack Clearance Inventory"; Oregon Department of Transportation – Rail Division; Shannon & Wilson, Inc.; Feb 2009
http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RAIL/docs/rail_study/appendix_c_oregon_rail_tunnel_assessment.pdf



Rain having started, the rest of us dodged back into Tunnel 14 where Doug read more of the criminal forensics story that emerged from the Tunnel 13 train robbery, records & stories assembled by Dr. Espinoza for the trip (which he was unable to attend). He compiled this material from newspaper stories, sworn testimonies, and eyewitness accounts:

“The doctor and I were a little late in arriving at the station. But, on the way up, I noticed a tan colored car nosed in to a logging road, right side, going up into the mountain. I asked the doctor to stop so we could investigate. He said, ‘no, there

may be people up there who need help.’ From later information it was only 10 to 12 minutes later the boys got in this car and drove back down the road, meeting the Jackson county [sic] law officers going up the road. My curiosity was prompted by the fact I had seen this car in a garage in Ashland. There is a possibility the boys were laying in the underbrush on the mountain side waiting for a lull in the traffic so they could get away.

Or, they may have not.”⁴



The rest hiked up to the trestle over Wall Creek and a date with a thunderstorm.

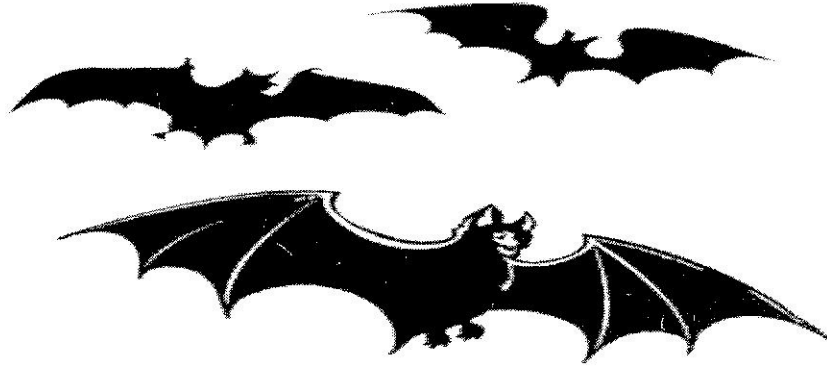
Walking a big, steel trestle more than 100 feet above a creek during a lightning storm is not a recommended practice so, once we heard thunder, we hurried to the far side. Taking refuge under the trees, we waited it out and wondered if the Tunnel 13 group was currently in the 2/3-mile-long, underground section of the rails, or was busy getting wet. Fortunately, the rain quit in ten minutes or so. consensus being that the steep slope up to the tracks at the beginning of the hike was quite enough, we opted to return the way we came instead of bushwhacking steeply back down to our vehicles. The day was by now hot, other than in the tunnels, so our goodbyes were quick.

LW & DV

⁴ “Some Backgrounding Comment... On Exciting Articles”, newspaper clippings from K. Horton, printed in The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, 08 Sep 1963

Barnum Cave

Liz Wolff Tue 9/8/2015 6:45 PM



Barnum Cave Bat Program 2015

The US Forest Service and California Fish & Wildlife Service evening walks have been taking place for several years. The walks through Barnum Cave began a few years ago, and have been held mid-August. There is a brief talk about bats: physiology, habitats and habits, and White Nose Syndrome (WNS). The week or so before the event, I spend time looking at updates to the ongoing disaster for the eastern bats, the most recent spread of it, and any remedies that have been tried and may look promising.

This year was no different. Despite this year's extremely smoky conditions, a group of about 30-35 gathered at dusk to hear about bats and caves, then tour Barnum Cave. Two Barnum family descendants attended this year to learn more of their family history. On the surface, I talked about the physiology, habitats & habits of bats, Ray Miller played bat calls and interpreted them for the group. Liz then spoke on WNS, answered questions about the possibility of WNS coming here, and everyone geared up for the cave trip.

Inside the gated cave Liz talked on volcanic eruptions, lava flows, cave environments and what is known of Barnum Cave human-use history while the group sat on the ubiquitous breakdown letting their eyes adjust to the dark. During the tour conservation was noted in the spray paint section of the cave. In the final chamber before going "upstairs" the group, sitting in the absolute dark, heard about bat navigation, rat navigation and how other animals may use the cave for parts of their life cycle. Upstairs we talked about formations that are found in many lava tubes: popcorn, coralloids, remelt drip formations, runnels and sags.

Standing "upstairs" at the ledge bats we noticed flying "downstairs" and as we approached the gate many more were counted. A large group of Townsend's big eared bats, a maternity colony, was noticed hanging out in a small dome outside the gate, just barely inside the cave. **LW**



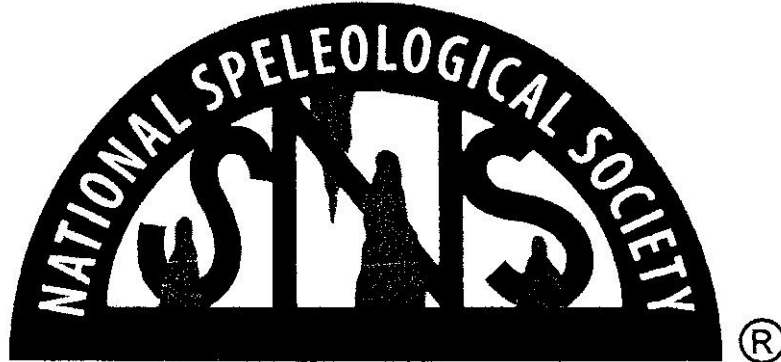
Biologist Mellen Colberg talks about bat physiology while Sam Cuenca assists. Ray Miller and Liz Wolff look on. 2014



At the Upstairs Balcony. 2015

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SHASTA AREA GROTTO

The Shasta Area Grotto is a conservation minded organization devoted to the protection and study of caves and their contents.



Shasta Area Grotto is an Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society.

SAG RAG

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STAMP

TO:

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