

THE SAG-RAG
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Merry Christmas Shasta Area Grotto

The SAG Rag is published bi-monthly by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editors are Jim and Liz Wolff, PO Box 865, McCloud, Ca. 96057. 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. Subscriptions are \$4/yr. or 75¢/issue. Grotto dues are \$4/individual and \$6/family.

- Jan. 9, 1987 Grotto meeting at Wolff's in McCloud (see map page 4). Results of elections will be announced. Depending on weather, cave trips and/or rope practice. Bring your long-johns and slides!
- Feb. 13, 1987 Grotto meeting at Kottinger's in Mt. Shasta (see map page 4). This is usually dead-o-winter up here folks, so drive safely and plan on going skiing (maybe even some cavin'!)

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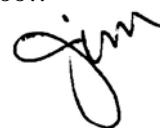
THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Around this time of the year, I'm sure, everyone sits back and reflects at the accomplishments of the year gone by ..., don't we? Well, the grotto on the other hand, doesn't have that much to reflect back on really

I'm not so sure if the reason(s) for the lack of "accomplishments" this year isn't just poor leadership on my part. I guess I've been discouraged from being more assertive, by a person unmentioned, when dealing with the topics of politics, grotto policies, membership recruitment and training, even cave management! I guess I should have delegated, or rather, assigned ("volunteered"?) someone to help out with whatever the task was then ..., but the problem with that is getting willing volunteers! All I can say is, GET INVOLVED! You can't say "I can't" until you've tried!

I guess another reason for not running for office this year is that I feel we have plenty of unutilized talent in our grotto, that he/she should take over now and make the needed changes, to make this a fine grotto to belong to I know I will do my best to help the new exec. committee, will you?

Many thanks for a good caving year, and, MERRY CHRISTMAS too!!



From a Letter by Tom Tyler...

“It was an odd job” at best. I was hired by a Canadian Resources Firm as part of a four-man crew to retimber and pump the water out of the lower workings of an old gold mine near Virginia City, Nevada. We were given the old maps of the mine and were to confirm what could be made accessible to their geologists; in cavers’ terms, “explore.” The original shaft was 380 feet deep with horizontal workings at 100 and 200 feet, and some small exploratory drifts off the bottom. The water table was at about 100 feet, so all the lower drifts were flooded. After retimbering 90 feet of the existing, but collapsed shaft, for access, we then positioned a pump and some 50 feet of four-inch rubber and fire hose up the shaft and down the canyon. After about three days of twelve to sixteen-hour pump sitting sessions, the water started to recede down the drifts and “things” started to appear. Things which had not seen light in 65 years: ore cars, picks, shovels and pneumatic drills. Many of these items I took home ... what a job ... too bad the assays were poor. We spent five weeks just pumping water out of thousands of feet of drift. Unfortunately for this caver the firm went belly up and we never got to the 200 foot level, but we did find some nice artifacts in the upper dry levels.”

* * * * *

Cave Accident – Brokedown Palace Cave – 8/30/86 by Jim Wolff

Several hours into Brokedown Palace the three of us, Steve Knutson, Charlie Dolan, and myself recharged our carbides just before entering a new passage that we were going to map

Up until that time the cave was fairly dry. We had to wade through a short section that had hip-deep water, but otherwise our packs kept dry, except for once I stopped for a drink out of a small waterfall and briefly wetted my pack under the spray. The pack is a Lost Creek Pack with no drain grommets. The nylon tube-like extension of the pack was wet by then

Upon entering, the new passage conditions changed to low, muddy and wetter! I had a dual lighting system on my hard hat, one carbide (lit) – the other, an electric light (unlit).

The survey began with Knutson scouting ahead and taking book, I was following as the head chain and setting stations, with Dolan using the instruments and taking “the smart end of the tape”. Anyway, after several stations along I stopped long enough to take my pack off so I could toss the thing ahead of me. A belly crawl was ahead in which up until then had been just a 4 foot diameter tube I looked down to unhook my waist strap on my pack and ... BOOM ! ! Carbide explosion in my pack blew my light out and plastered my face and eyes with mud!

After regaining my senses (!?) it was determined that immediate 1st Aid was needed!! After scraping away some of the mud from my eyes, with the help of Charlie and Steve, we flushed out the mud with a squirt bottle of water and a (clean) handkerchief (thanks Charlie!) It was after several minutes of flushing before I was able to see. Steve, as trip leader, asked if I wanted to abort the mapping and return to the surface. No, I decided, even though I was still suffering from shock and grit was still rolling around in my eyes, I would continue the survey, this time with the electric on. But first, we had to divvy up the small pieces of gear from my pack. The pack had split up the seams and couldn’t hold but the larger items, even when Steve wrapped it up into a little ball with its straps. The two Fastex buckles had broken and in the pack, just a spare light bulb received damage. The trip out of the cave was uneventful.

PERSONAL ANALYSIS (and lessons learned!)

All things considered, I should have used my electric when wet conditions warranted it. Also, since the Lost Creek Packs are pretty waterproof, I shouldn’t have rolled the top closed so tight, thus preventing any escaping acetylene gas from building up to explosive amounts. Since my pack doesn’t have a drain grommet and the stitching is pretty tight, I had a bomb ready to go off! I had my dump bag double wrapped, but the two carbide changes in there were 3/4 spent and still generating ..., oh well, live and learn!

Dead Horse Cave, Washington, Nov. 9, 1986, during the BOG weekend By Liz Wolff

Jim and I had volunteered to lead a cave trip to Dead Horse Cave in the Trout Lake area of Washington. Having lived in the area several years ago and working in the cave, we had no trouble finding it and leading our party consisting of Michelle Richardson and us to the cave. This was our first time in many years and the first tourist trip ever, we poked into passages we'd never seen.

A brief description cannot do the cave justice. We entered the lower entrance and continued quickly to the breakdown area, bypassing several side passages, including the Masochist Maze. The Maze is an aptly named braided crawlway complex. From the breakdown area, we continued into the Stream Passage, which contains a stream 3/4's of the year, passed up the entrance to Misery Crawl (which loops around and rejoins the Stream Passage, or vice-versa), past more side passages, and came to the River Passage. This really is unusual in a lava tube – a year-round river. This late in the year the flow is still strong and covers the floor of the 10' wide passage.

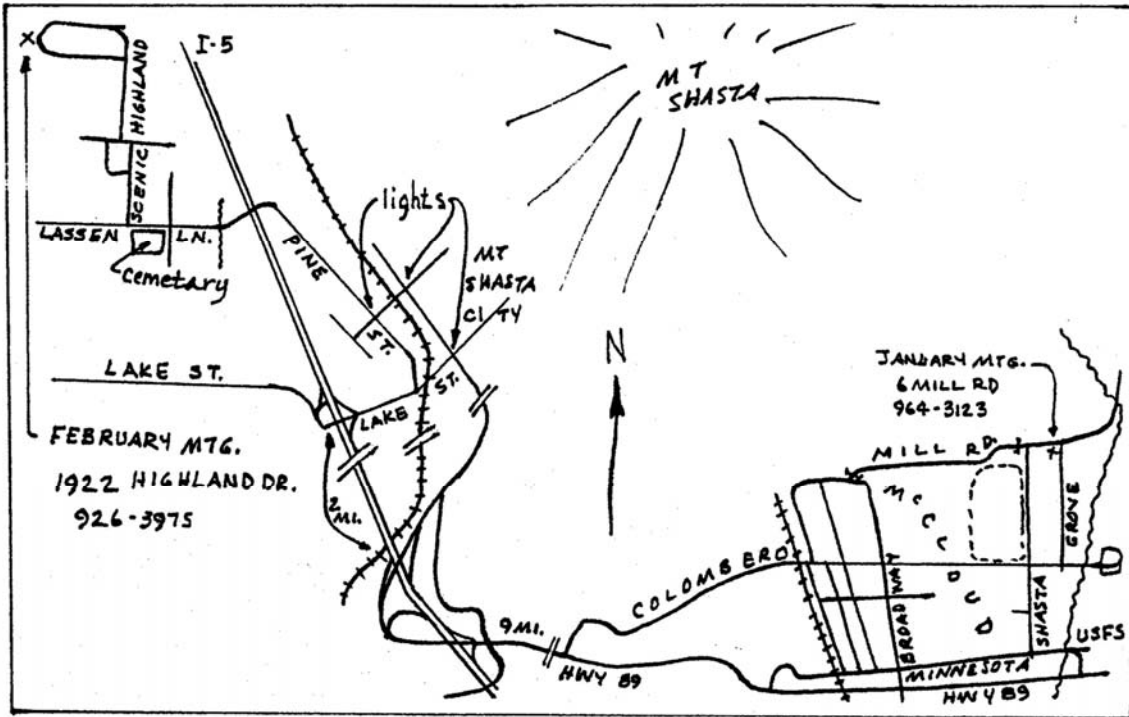
From the junction we headed down stream, exploring every side passage in this complex. There is one that even is entered on the left (3 different places), crosses over the main tube, and exits on a ledge on the right. Further downstream we climbed into another side passage, with Jim and Michelle taking the upper way, while I took the lower. Theirs ended in breakdown, while mine rejoined the river. At that point the river sinks into the breakdown and can be followed thru the breakdown for another 100' or so before the entire passage is blocked.

Heading upstream, we met another group of BOG members (they do go caving and they have pictures to prove it!) at the crawlway junction. We headed on upstream to the spring, headwaters of the river, looking for critters where we had found them before with no luck, not even a glimpse of something white darting out of sight. Our next diversion was in the Balcony Passage, a 700' side passage that ends in breakdown.

Continuing up-cave, we took the left-hand fork into the Note Passage to the ends, both of them. Back at the fork we met up with the other group, who wanted to see the Rathole. At the 10' climb up we had gotten a few people up, when another group of BOG'ers were coming down. The Rat-hole is a real bottle neck so we waited for them to come down. While waiting, Michelle and I, being naturally curious, noticed a small hole at floor level behind us. This is not on the 1912 map, we thought to find virgin passage. Pushing through the 9" high hole we slithered into walking passage with many diverging ways to go, all crawlways. Coming into a room with 3 more ways to go, we found a track of the wild Vibram* in the sandy floor. Returning to the rest of our groups atop the ledge, we found most of group III down, and group II heading back, as they had members who would not fit thru the Rat-hole. I gallantly gave Bob Liebman my Knee pads, who had more use for them than I, at that point.

Twenty-five feet of belly crawl brought us to the Rat-hole itself. There are sure a lot of buttons in this 25'. The Rat-hole is entered from a 5' X 1' crawl that takes a 90° turn, straight up. The Rat-hole itself is a spacious 9" X 15", it's that 90° turn with a twist that weeds people out, and 2' long (tall?), ending' in a sand floored entrance room. We signed Cascade Grotto's register and exited the cave. It was snowing again. We had driven up the 1/4 mile access road to the upper entrance so had dry clothes waiting for us. After changing and driving down, we met up with group II and retrieved my kneepads, then hustled down to the airport to get Michelle on her plane on time.

- Vibram-soled boot print (for those of us not fluent in Boot) – pdf ed.



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NEWS DATED MATERIAL

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