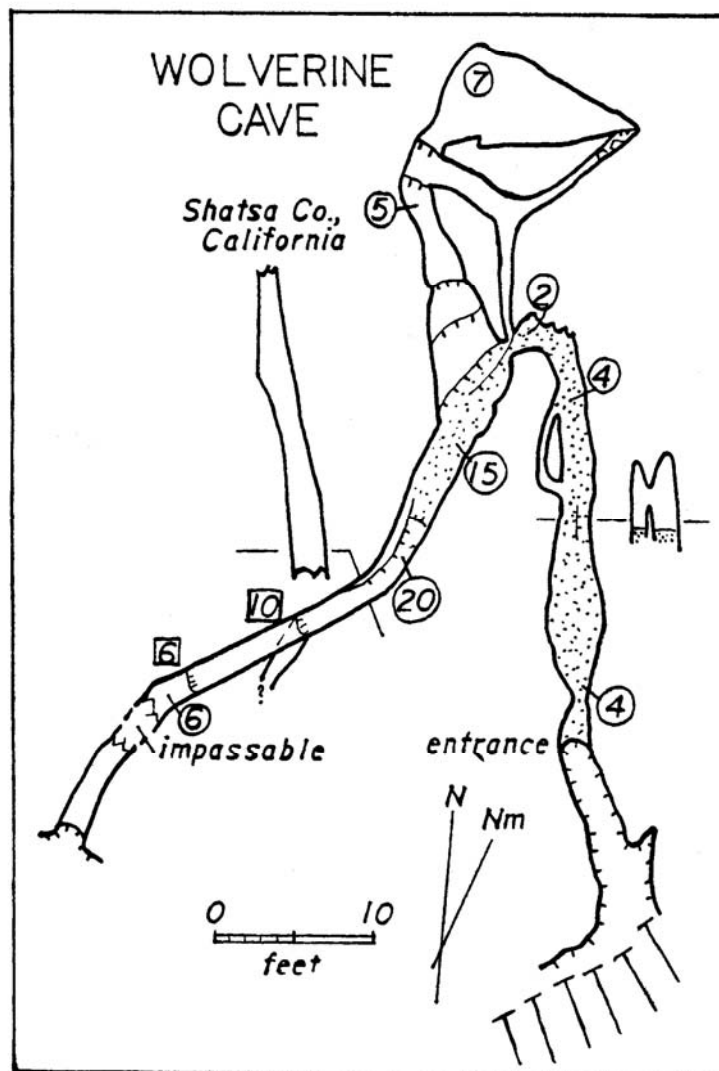


# THE SAG RAG



JULY-AUGUST 1987

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Map: Wolverine Cave

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. Grotto meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Friday of each month. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter. Material must be submitted for SAG RAG by the 24th of second month after printing (i.e., Feb., Apr., June, etc.). Dues are due in January. Subscriptions are \$4/year or 75¢/issue.

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**CALENDAR of EVENTS**

- Sept. 5-7 SEQUOIA REGIONAL. Fir Campground, Sequoia N.F. Western Region mtg. hosted by Mother Lode Grotto (see article below).
- 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> wk of Sept. SPELEO CAMP-KMCTF.
- Sept. 11 SAG Gen mtg., Kottinger's (see map on page 7). Cave-huntin' in limestone near Gazelle.
- Sept. 26-27 SAG Houseboat trip. Shasta Lake, Lakelevel Cave mapping trip. Depart at Packer's Bay (see map on page 7), bring camping gear and personal floatation devices for all. Call Claude Smith or Wolff for details.
- Oct. 9 SAG Gen mtg., Wolff's (see map on page 7). Tombstone Mtn. trip, with other trips possible to the lavas.

LOOKING FORWARD TO: Wellhella Cave trip in Oct. or early Nov. (see Wolff).

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE WESTERN REGION'S '87 SEQUOIA REGIONAL MTG. IS STILL GONNA HAPPEN!!!**

Yup, after recent threats by the F.S. to cancel the whole thing, the tension has been relieved some by insisting that the organizers' (the Mother Lode Grotto) recognize the Government's (dim) point of view to this get-together. Why "they"(Uncle Sam) are getting picky in regulations are for liability reasons – in this "sue-happy-and-get-rich-quick-society" that we live in today. The Region would have to be highly insured to cover the planned activities ...

There won't be on-the-site booze sales or "organized cave trips", but that won't stop folks from bringing their own booze (BYOB), and "they" can't stop cavers from organizing their own cave trips to the many caves in the area. And as for the 100 person limit to the campground, well. it still stands that some may be asked to go home early – but the chance the Sequoia NF folks will overlook the few extra cavers that get along well with each other ..., right on!?!?

\* \* \* \* \*

FLASH! SAG member Steve Knutson is featured in 9/1/87 Wall St. Journal article – on front page!?

\* \* \* \* \*

Thanks go out to Ray Miller for printing or copying the RAG, with Liz helping with mailing.

**EDITORIAL** by J.W.

Well, here I am again, “doin’ the RAG” ,by myself, again! Why it takes me 3-5 days to do each issue I’ll never know ...! Liz is doing some field mapping of the Nature Conservancy’s McCloud River Preserve property this time, and left me with the honors, lucky me!

This issue we have the use of a new, well, not-so-new typewriter with larger type, which makes it much easier for me to fill the pages and easier for you to read too!

I have gotten several newspaper clippings and cartoons from our readers and members, so we have some “filler” material, but what we could use is some drawings and/or maps to accompany an article or trip report. So, keep those cards, letters or whatever, EXCEPT LETTER BOMBS, and thanks from the Staff of the SAG RAG !!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Wolverine Cave: its discovery...** by Tom Hesseldenz

Several years ago I discovered that Bones Gulch, a small tributary to the McCloud River Preserve, was fed by a number of small springs. Visual observations and air photos didn’t indicate the presence of any limestone, so I didn’t think much of it at the time.

I was back up in Bones Gulch in the winter of 1986, when I noticed one spring on the other side of the canyon which had quite a bit of volume. Also, some of the preserve’s college student interns whom I had sent to the Beetle Butte limestone outcrop had been describing to me a location that didn’t match with that outcrop; indeed, their location was just above Bones Gulch.

Given all of this, I decided to follow the spring to see what was going on. Sure enough, several hundred yards up the hill the spring emerged from a very discrete hole in the ground, too small to crawl into of course. About 50 yards above that was the lower end of a small limestone outcrop. The reason it wasn’t obvious on air photos was because this limestone had so much sand in it that its color was dark brown.

Where there are outcrops and resurgences, there must be caves, right? Sure enough, I finally found one, albeit fairly small. The entrance passage had several depressions which appeared to be bedding areas for a large animal. I immediately thought of bears, lions, and wolverine, and wondered who I might find at home.

The passage narrowed the further I went (of course), until I was finally pushing my way on my belly through a very tight squeeze. I was now in the perfect position to find that large animal, but fortunately it was not home!

A little further the passage made a sharp left-hand turn and opened into a tall narrow room with some bacon-rind formations. There were some potential leads, but having only one light, no ropes, and being alone, a rare display of prudence ensued and I exited the cave, saving it for a return visit with some SAG members.

**Wolverine Cave: The Survey Trip, 6/14/86** by Jim Wolff

“Trust me!” Tom said. After all, he had found a real cave, in rock (that didn’t particularly look like limestone) – and in a real small outcrop at that! You know, the way that guy Tom spins his yarns, he had five others willing to go along and try to humor him ....

So, with Steve Knutson, Claude Smith, myself, Tom Hesseldenz and his friends Rich Powell and Jenny, we started up the newly-built trails that led us towards Bones gulch – somewhere across the McCloud River from the Preserve’s cabins. The first thing to encounter was the hairy cable crossing at the river(yes you can put three cavers, plus gear in the trolley!), then the mile hike with bees and rattletails along the trail to the cave, then we beat the brush (and thrashed ourselves) up to the cave. The rest was easy – “a cake-walk”!

Continued on next page

Once at the cave entrance (which looked mighty good to me), some geared up and “the others” (those newer to this sort of thing) waited at the entrance (for an encouraging word?) from Tom, but to no avail .... So, Steve, Claude, Tom and myself set to mapping the cave from the entrance in, noting freshly cleaned bones and guano on the way in ....

The rest of the trip is history now; Steve named it Hesseldenz’s Secret Cave #172-45-B since Tom couldn’t come up with a name at the time. And Tom’s friends got coerced into the cave (their first cave, ever!), so they get my congratulations! We had a great time, it was well worth the effort! Thanks Tom, I owe ya one!

### **Wolverine Cave: Rick’s visit** by Jim Wolff

This is only second-hand info, ‘cause I was sick in bed (in fact for the next two days!), Tom had a work party to supervise, so Rick took off with pretty good directions to find the cave with little difficulty ... As the story goes, Rick got to the cave entrance ok, but got turned back by a horrible smell and as he got closer, a terribly loud hissing .... The cave seemed less important all of a sudden .... Rick later found a surface pit that has a diggable lead at the bottom.

### **Wolverine Cave: the Rest of the Story** by Tom Hesseldenz

After hearing Rick’s exciting account of the hissing, growling animal with very bad breath lurking in Wolverine Cave, I was convinced that this animal must indeed be a wolverine. After all, the preserve’s college student interns had found wolverine tracks in the snow at the mouth of Bones Gulch in the spring of 1982 and the winter of 1986.

Rick’s adventure coupled with the interns’ previous findings led to the belated decision to call the cave Wolverine Cave. (It had been over a year since the cave was found and surveyed, and true to form I had not gotten around to giving the Wolffs a name for it!)

At any rate, Rick’s discovery also led to the decision to get some people and track plates together and go back up to the cave. Don Shimatsu (fisheries intern), Rob (UC Berkeley grad student), Travis Wheaton (7-year-old “research assistant”) and I headed up on the morning of 8/19.

When we got to the outcrop, I instructed everyone to be very quiet. We were fairly successful at this until Travis slipped and banged his knee. Suddenly the air was filled with a pitiful wailing noise not unlike an injured deer, and I wondered what our friend hiding in the cave might think of this!

After about 5 minutes my patience ran out and Don and I continued up the outcrop to the cave. With cameras poised we slowly approached the entrance. Suddenly, about 10 feet above me something started hissing! Down went the track plates, up went the camera, and back went the feet, but what the camera and I finally focused on was not a wolverine at all ... it was a baby turkey vulture!

Almost ready to fledge, the little bugger hopped down into the cave and continued to hiss. With the resultant amplification of sound and foul odors of the nesting site, it was no surprise that Rick thought he was up against something much more threatening!

By this time Travis had recovered so I signaled for him and Rob to join us at the entrance. I then crawled into the cave to find that there were actually 2 babies. Travis joined me and I took some photos of him with the birds to entertain his mother with. The stench soon became overwhelming, however, and the birds were not pleased with our presence, so I did not take anyone further into the cave.

We left the birds to their aromatic little niche and continued up the mountain, not bothering to set any track plates for wolverine. Since the trip, I’ve thought about changing the newly-named cave to “Buzzard Roost Cave” or “Nasal Nausia”, but being a romanticist and wishful-thinker, I’ll stick with “Wolverine Cave”!

**OTHER TRIPS WITH SAG MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ...**

- Lover’s Leap    After the July SAG mtg. several members took another poke at that rock. This time it revealed several small caves, one of which is named Pigeon Cave. It has tons of guano and the pigeons to go with it! Plus a nice high dome with light pouring in.
  
- Rainy Cave     July 25<sup>th</sup> – Steve Knutson found this dandy in the Marbles. Several trips into it this year, but has yielded around 400 ft., but offers possibilities, good ones!
  
- Dave Fidler’s Ice Cave    On the 28th of August I accompanied the discoverer to an unnamed ice cave in the Giant Crater Lava Flow. He found the cave in 1927 while on a hunting trip and asked that I name it after him.

\* \* \* \* \*

**I Asked For A Cave Trip! By Jim Mosser**

While making my vacation plans I thought a trip to my good friends the Wolffs would be a splendid beginning to my tour through California! I thoughtfully called well in advance, the night before leaving, to inquire if they might be around and could we go caving? Well, vacation luck would have it that yes Jim Wolff would be home and yes again he’d take me caving. He chuckled on the phone, “oh yes, I have a good little cave in mind!”

I arrived in the early afternoon on Saturday Aug. 29th at the Wolff Den, where we speedily made ready for our trip to the “good little cave” ....

Several hours later, when we were really ready to go caving, we unloaded our gear and locked up the car. We strolled down the road and tossed rocks into a little cave entrance, listening to the rock fall. Having thus amused ourselves, we walked down the road, scrambled up the hill and crawled into the cave. In the semi-darkness of the entrance chamber we fiddled with our lamps and donned our cave apparel, mine consisting of clean coveralls and my good hiking shoes. Jim rigged a hand line at a nice little pit, while I kept him company. Jim’s carbide lamp then decided to act up a bit, so he tinkered a bit, then finally prepared to get on with the cave trip.

Arriving again at the pit Jim proceeded to slither down the crack to the overhang, then braced at the edge, began a detailed description of the situation to negotiate. Much later Jim made it down and I followed, a sporting little downclimb.

Jim then led me to a small crawlway heading downward where I began griming up my coveralls. I had fun pretending to be a lizard as I slithered toward a small slit in the passage. Again I tossed a rock down, then slithered back to where Jim waited.

We next went to a little chimney where I was to lead up the passage. Well, sometime later I was really begrimed, hot and sweaty and stuck so one arm was flaying the air uselessly – a small rock prevented my moving the arm farther up the passage to where I could turn it to grasp rock. I was also stuck by the seat or what was left of the seat of my coveralls. Jim then informed me the passage dead ended above and with a gasp and release of my holds I slid out with amazing ease and landed right at Jim’s feet! We rested!

We then went back to the bottom of the rope and walked off down the passage the other way looking at formations, pillars, flowstone, helictites, etc. We admired the mud-covered and uncovered spelean splendors, then as our lamps sputtered we made ready to exit the cave. Not being fast enough we both re-carbided and chimneyed up the drop, derigged the rope and made for the safety of daylight.

Outside we discovered my clean coveralls now brown and my hiking shoes the same. Tomorrow we would patch the holes and remove the torn-off pocket of my coveralls.

Continued on next page

It was a good little cave as Jim had advertised, well decorated by Oregon standards. The brown stuff, now that’s another matter, is it time for a McCloud Reservoir Cave clean up? Well, I asked for a cave trip and I certainly got one I’ll remember! Thanks Jim and if you’re interested I found a “nice little cave” over in the Lava Beds I’d like to take you to see!

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Readers,

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be an editor (shriek at the thought) and get all-of-a-sudden two, three or more cave trip reports of the same trip! What would you do ...?! Answer: Publish all of them! (when you are hurtin’ for material, you’ll take anything!) Now seriously folks, the next one you read is from the same trip. It was just that Jim and I agreed to do this, as an experiment, to see different points-of-view. Read on, it’s not that long. JHW – ed.

\* \* \* \* \*

**McCloud Reservoir Cave – again?! 8/29/87 by Jim Wolff**

It had all started the night before when a phone call pulled me from the clutches of my typewriter – as I was busy with getting this newsletter done. So, oh well, another distraction! Not getting hard with myself, I found it too easy to say “o.k.” when Jim Mosser called and asked if he could come over and, could we go caving??

I had just the cave for him to do ...! The McCloud Res. Cave has its share of goo, but has its share of goodies too! Lots of nice, but small, speleothems, and yet much more must have existed by seeing the stumps of speleothems past ....

Well, I guess I must have had more faith in Jim, ‘cause all I took along was a hand line that we could use to free climb in and out. After rigging the rope I went down, describing in order, the footholds that weren’t obvious from above. So then Jim went down. The rest of the trip was like, “sure Jim, go ahead and try that lead!”

After “encouraging” Jim into some of the tightest and greasiest spots I knew of in the cave, all I get from him is grief, yet I swear at times he musta smiled, how else did he get mud in his teeth!?

\* \* \* \* \*

We loosen the frayed chin strap and tip the old helmet to member Tim Rich of Redding for supplying this article. You may notice this cave exploration was handled in typical SAG fashion. If material cannot be identified, we beat on it with a sledge-hammer.



Glass coffin dates to the Ice Age!

# CAVE EXPLORERS FIND ALIEN MUMMY

Human-like creature has green skin and wings like an insect!

*Shocking discovery from deep underground . . .*

Scientists investigating an unexplored cave in Turkey have unearthed a crystalline coffin dating back to the Ice Age — containing the mummified corpse of an alien being from another world!

The human-like creature, which stood only four feet tall in life, has pebbly, leaf-green skin and filmy, transparent wings like an insect.

Despite its bizarre appearance, Dr. Fatih Turnsunbay said the being had walked upright on two feet and has the hands and the sex organs of a male more human than animal.

"This could be the most significant scientific discovery in the history of mankind," proclaimed the

leader of the team that found the coffin.

"All the evidence we now have clearly establishes that the corpse is that of an alien being from another world far beyond the visible stars.

"And, we have definitely fixed the period of its burial as the Ice Age by the rock stratum in the depths of the cave where the coffin was found."

Turnsunbay said the coffin is made of a shimmering, crystalline material not found on earth and not unlike that found in rock samples brought back from the moon by American astronauts.

"The crystal coffin is incredibly strong," said Turnsunbay, a noted professor of archaeology in Istanbul.

"In fact, it is easily the strongest material I have ever heard of. We slammed it with a sledgehammer and didn't even scratch it."

But far more extraordinary are the results of tests on the insect-like alien. They reveal that the

## Cave explorers find alien mummy!

*Ice Age coffin yields incredible evidence of other-world visitors*

creature is actually older than Earth.

"We have used every sophisticated age-dating process available anywhere in the world, and the numbers we get are identical with those obtained from core samples taken miles beneath the surface of Earth.

"Its age is beyond comprehension. Somewhere out there in deep space there is a planet undoubtedly very much like our own where human-like creatures live for millions upon millions of years. It's amazing!"

Turnsunbay reported the alien's

hands and feet — including fingernails and toenails — are distinctly human, as are its nose, lips and ears.

"Only its eyes are different from ours," he said.

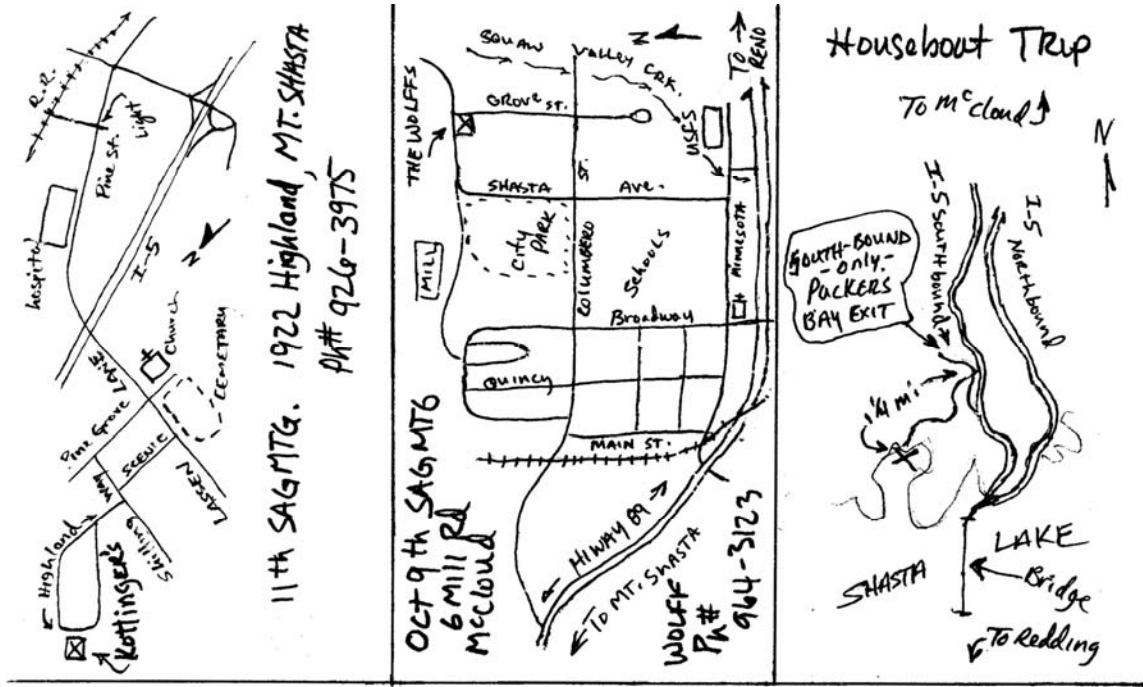
"They are three times larger, are totally colorless and like those of a reptile.

"But there is one thing that definitely does bother me," Turnsunbay added in his report.

"With a creature such as this, I'm not at all certain it really is dead. And that is very frightening."

— MICKEY MCGUIRE

Maps to the meetings



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