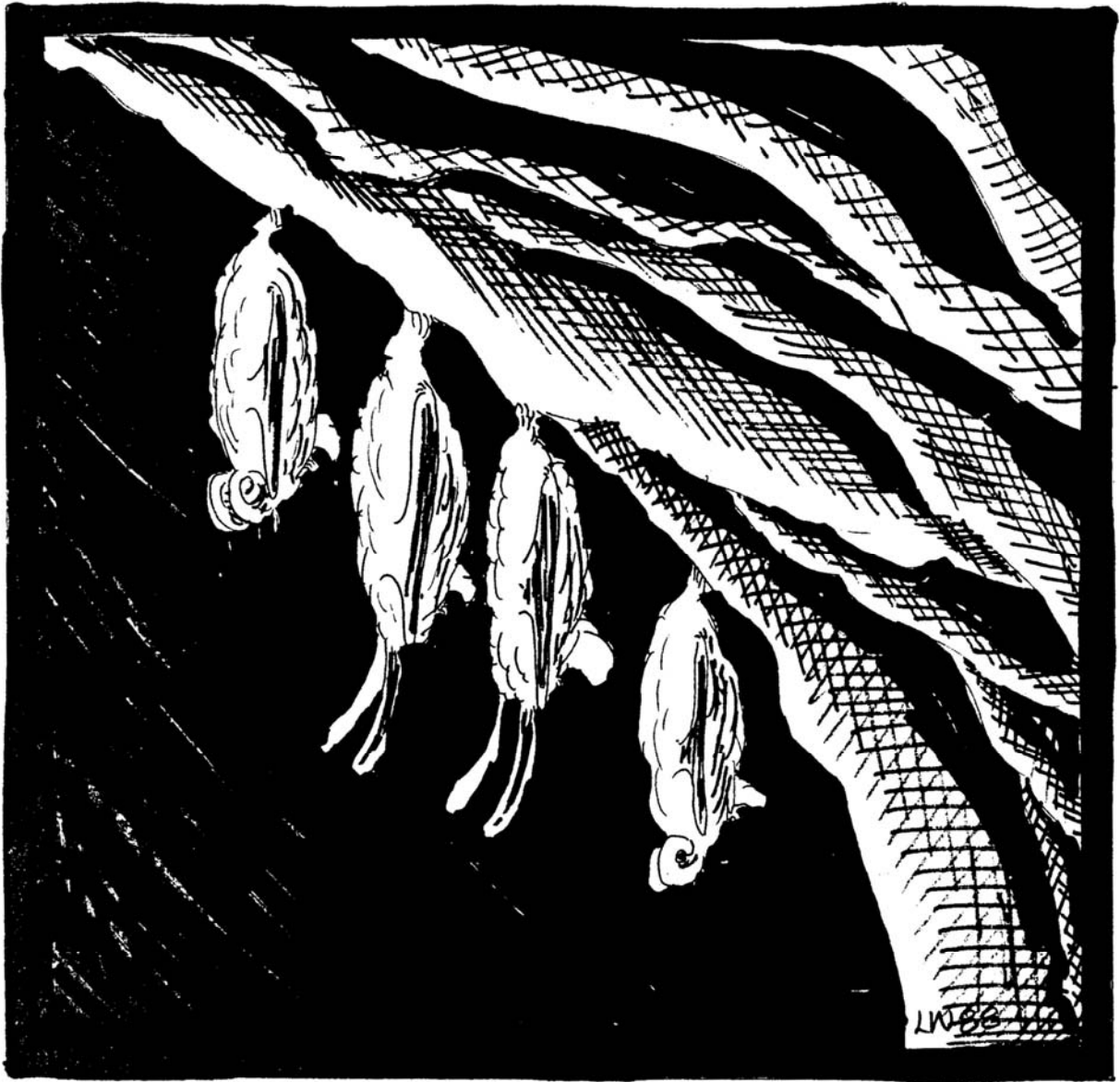


THE SAGRAG

VOL. 7 NO. 1.

JAN-FEB. 1988



WANTED

PLECOTUS TOWNSENDII OR THE LONG EARRIED BAT
(DO NOT APPREHEND)

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 the second Friday of each month at 7:30 pm. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter. Dues are due January 1. Subscriptions are \$4/year or 75¢/copy.

* * * * *

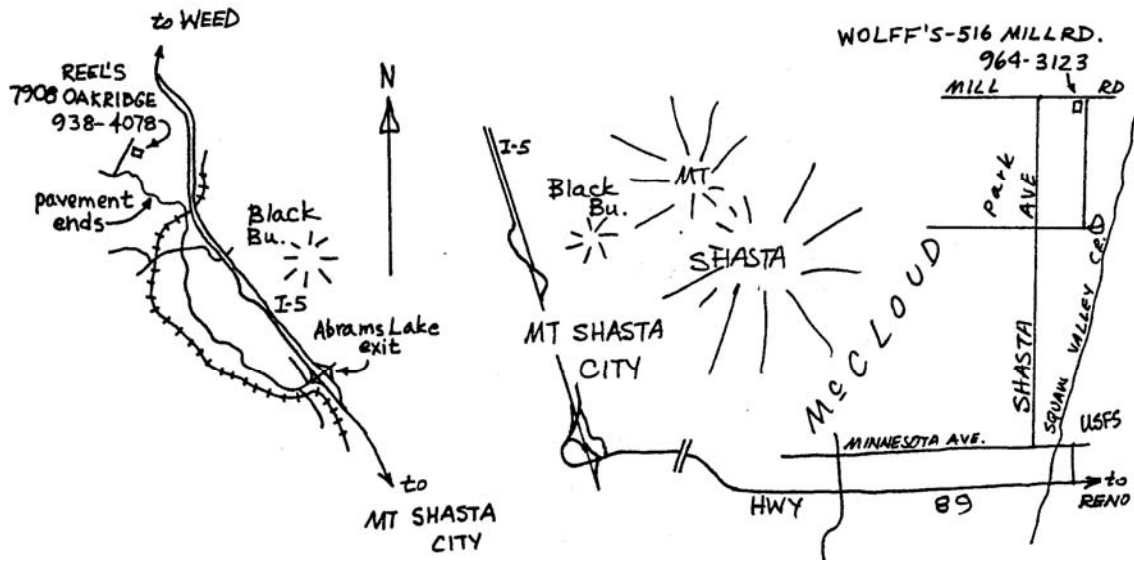
FINAL REMINDER FINAL

DUES WERE DUE JANUARY 1 Make checks payable to: Shasta Area Grotto. Send them to Claude Smith, 131 Oleander Circle, Redding CA 96001

* * * * *

CAVING CALENDAR

- March 11 Grotto meeting at George Reel's, Weed, CA. See map below.
- April 8 Grotto meeting at Wolff's, McCloud, CA. See map below.
- May 13 Grotto meeting on the coast. More information later.
- June 27 – July 1 NSS Convention, Hot Springs, S.D.



* * * * *

LONG EARED BATS UNCOMMON by Ray Miller

Now I know what cavers do in the winter – count hibernating bats. It seems our Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus Townsendii*, if you are being introduced formally) is quite limited in its range and should possibly be put on somebody's list of critters that need special protection. A team of four researchers from UC Berkeley are looking into the matter for the California Fish and Game Department. They were aware of the SAG mapping and bat inventory of John Jones [Jack Jones – pdf ed] Ice Cave (see SAG RAG vol 4 no 4, July-August 1985), so they contacted Jim Wolff to inquire about a field trip. Liz Wolff called me to see if I was dumb enough to go along.

The weather was such that a trip into John Jones didn't seem feasible. Liz and I remembered seeing the Long Eared Bat in more accessible caves in the summer months, so we suggested checking them for hibernating animals. Of the three locations we checked, one cave yielded a count

of 102 bats, the second cave 9 bats; the third cave had been avoided by the bats because the temperature was too warm for hibernation. Our new friends from Berkeley were quite happy. This information significantly extends the known range for this bat.

The warm (50° F) cave was not really a disappointment though. We spent an hour or so collecting samples of bat and rat manure and (thrill of thrills!) other scats that could not be positively identified!!!! Part of the time was spent teaching me how to differentiate between rat and bat scats. I could easily be persuaded to hold a seminar on the subject at a future SAG meeting for those who don't know scats.

This will give you ammunition for the next time conversation lags at dinner: Bats copulate during hibernation (the female sleeps thru it – ed.) and the young are born soon after the bats become active in the spring. Hibernating bats will rouse during the night and change position, but they will not fly. Hibernating bats are sensitive to noise.

A meaningful report on hibernating bats includes: kind of bat (if known, a preliminary key is available); number of bats in a group, and number of groups; number of single bats; height of bats above the floor; distance from the cave entrance to the hibernation area; and cave and surface temperatures. Prior to the end of winter we hope to survey the hibernating bat population in John Jones.

* * * * *

SLEEPING BATS AND TIDY VANDALS? by Liz Wolff

Only crazy people go caving in the winter – driving through ice and snow, fording raging rivers (dry washes?), to climb by cable ladder into a cave to look for bats. Our objective the morning of February 6, was John Jones [Jack Jones – pdf ed] Ice Cave. It was sunny and 25° F when we left home. The 4WD brigade carrying Jim Kottinger, Ray Miller, George Reel, and Jim & Liz Wolff prepared to get stuck in the mud and snow (or not) on the way to the cave.

Meeting at the Tennant turnoff, we turned in our hubs and headed off the road. Arriving at the cave without incident, we rigged a cable ladder to climb into the sunny side of the sink; the easily climbed route was covered with ice and snow, as was the “bridge”. We took the day’s temperature (48° F), entered the cave and took its temperature – 35° F – heaven for a hibernating bat. Ray collected guano and Jim found a bat mummy, also collected. The first live bats were found 406 feet inside the cave. Traveling to the end we found 110 bats, a moth, the mummy, and mountains of breakdown.

The North end of this lava tube begins with table and chair sized breakdown, but it gets bigger the further you go, till at the end, 2 stacked blocks almost completely block the passage. Standing on one room-sized rock, underneath a precariously hanging bus-sized one, you can see over the stacked blocks into a dark void If you go along the right wall, cross behind the top block, climb over a bigger one on the left wall, crawl thru and then up, eventually you find yourself on the other side of the blockage, sweating. Temperature – 49° F, and 150’ back it was 33° F.

On up the breakdown pile, small rubble and dirt and moldy pine cones, and 4(!) unbroken beer bottles standing neatly on a rock shelf about 8’ up the wall! Tidy Vandals??? As we clambered on over the breakdown the darkness beckoned. Then a drop of about 100’ to the original floor, ropy pahoehoe, for about 50’. Soon we were seeing a slimy mud coating on the walls, then on the flat slabs of breakdown and it’s skating time – mud skating, that is. A ¼ - 1” coating on breakdown and sloping floor had us testing every step and looking for the rough places. This looks like it is a ponding area from the water (mud?) line on the wall. Finally we find a tidy pile of beer cans stashed behind a slumped wall lining marking the end of the cave. We had hoped for another entrance but found a tight, pinching crawl.

Before leaving we collected the cans to carry out. Upon reaching the blockage a poll was taken as to the probable length of the extension. Estimates ranged from 1400-1700’ (and one of 10 miles), with the consensus being 1500’ (+ 10 miles).

Back at the entrance we passed up the pleasure of the South end (more breakdown) much to George’s relief, to head for home before it was totally dark. Slithering through the mud and snow, we made it out to the highway without incident.

OTHER TRIPS BY SAG MEMBERS

SUBWAY CAVE – January 23. John and Lucas Marschner, Ray Miller, Roger Jones, Jim Wolff, Neils Smith. They found lotsa going cave north of Subway Cave, heading south toward Subway. As you know Subway gets too small to get through. They never reached the end of this one either.....

McCLOUD LIMESTONE FORMATION – February 13. In poison oak country, Claude Smith and Jim Wolff found a going pit. They'll return with a rope.....

Your trip report would be here if you had sent it!

THE SAG RAG / NSS
c/o J & L Wolff
P.O. Box 865
McCloud, CA 96057

FIRST CLASS MAIL

To:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 2	Caving calendar
Page 2	Long eared bats uncommon – by Ray Miller
Page 3	Sleeping bats and tidy vandals – by Liz Wolff
Page 4	Trips by SAG members