

SHASTA AREA GROTTO NEWSLETTER

THE SAG RAG

May - June 1990

Vol. 9 No. 3

Convention Time

In case some of you have been underground for the past few months, this is to inform you that the NSS National Convention will be held in Yreka this year from July 9th through July 13th. Most of the hard work is being done by SFBC (bless 'em), but as the on site Grotto, SAG has been given a few responsibilities.

Jim Wolff is this years' Convention Field Trip Coordinator, and he would like to see SAG members step in and volunteer some time to go caving and act as trip leaders. You can suggest a favorite cave you would like to introduce our visitors to, or you can just leave the choice up to Jim. Long range planning is nice, but you could even make arrangements to take a group out the day before you are able to go. The important thing is to be able to find the cave and to volunteer.

All leaders and participants will be required to sign liability waivers.

Volunteer help is also needed around the Siskiyou County Fair Grounds convention site. Please contact Jim Wolff at 964-3123 if you could spare some time before, during or after the convention. He will tell you which area is most in need of help.

We are a small grotto by any standards. We would like to have a strong showing at the convention, and to get that showing will require everyone who can participate in the convention to do so. If you can help, or if you can only attend one event please support the convention as best you can. And remember - it will be a long time before we are lucky enough to have another West Coast site selected for the national convention.

Ray Miller Substitute Editor

That fantastic editorial team of Wolff and Wolff is deeply involved in preparations for the 1990 NSS Convention in Yreka. Jim is the Field Trip Chairman and Liz is busy doing graphics plus what ever it is wives do to confuse husbands. To give them more time to take care of their stuff they have asked me to fill in as guest

editor. So, for one or two issues, there will be some changes as a different computer, word processor and editor grind out the RAG. Most of the changes will involve typos and bad grammar. Let it be fully understood here and now that SAG RAG chores revert to the Wolffs once the convention is history.

RM

The SAG RAG is published bi-monthly by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editors: Jim and Liz Wolff, PO Box 865, McCloud, Ca. 96057. Printing: Ray Miller. Grotto meetings are held the second Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter. Individual and family memberships are \$6 per year, due January 1, and prorated by quarter.

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Cave Butterflies by Bill Broeckel

Catwalk Cave is part of the Gaping Holes System. Gaping Holes - so named for the looks on the faces of guys like me when arriving at the cave.

The shivers I felt were no doubt due to the cool air rising out of the monstrous pit. The more experienced helped the less experienced with equipment, encouragement and know-how. So down we went. It was such a nice, sunny day, so why were all those butterflies down in my stomach?

Once all of us were safely descended, we were positioned to explore the lower end of Catwalk Cave. We left the Mossy Carpet Entrance behind, clambering over pile after pile of talus, fallen from the vaulted ceilings and walls many feet above us. Some blocks were the size of grand pianos or larger. In between the rock piles were sections of original lava tube with ropey

floors. lava stalagmites and endlessly fascinating textures on the walls.

This grand-daddy lava tube was entirely described in great detail in the Jan/Feb 1990 SAG RAG. Today we only saw the lower end of it.

Back at the Mossy Carpet Entrance, it was butterfly time again. Ascending devices attached to the feet with loops, grip the rope and slide up, but not down. You try to keep your balance while sliding the devices up the rope. This is a neat trick when you are half way up and feeling shaky.

This Grotto trip opens the summer season of caving camps. Our camp was set up at Trout Meadows on Friday night. June 1, 1990, in-between rainstorms. A thank-you is in order to the camp babysitter, who wishes all readers a happy summer of caving, both conventional and unconventional.

Grotto Cave Register Program

The SAG Cave Register program began in the fall of '89 with the installation of a register in Three Level Ice Cave (AKA Ice River, Mummy Case). Recently the Bat Cave (AKA Half Mile) register was installed by SAG members as a direct result of the recent addition of Bat and Porcupine lava tubes to the Shasta-Trinity NF recreation map. (SAG objects to the unnecessary attention directed to these caves.)

In line to receive future Registers are Porcupine Butte, Hourglass, Sign, Harris Mtn., Roadside Complex and Adams Home-

stead caves. These caves were selected because they receive a cross section of visitors with caving interests, and activity ranges from heavy to light. Ray directs tourists to Roadside through his Tourmaps, and he and the local Chambers of Commerce are most interested in determining a profile of the usage of this cave.

When visiting Bat and Three Level Caves please check the registers (i.e. register condition, forms and pencils), and if maintenance is required report it to Jim W. Please be sure to sign in while there!!

Minutes May 11, 1990 - Present: Bill Broeckel, Jim & Bea Kottinger, Jim & Liz Wolff, Neils Smith, Jay Swofford, George Reel, Ray Miller.

Chairman Neils called the meeting to order. Minutes accepted as read. Treasurer reported a balance of \$333.54.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The register for Bat Cave is ready to be installed. George moved the Grotto buy a star drill to install registers. Seconded and passed.
- George tried to find the Siskiyou County Cave Search & Rescue group without success. He will keep looking. Neils talked to the Lassen County Mine Rescue group. They are willing to train people. Our Grotto needs cave rescue and medical training. Ray talked about avoiding competitive S & R's.
- Ray talked about the lack of local convention media releases.
- Samwel vandalism: no lock in sight, gate broken, paint dumped on the second level. Road sign still there.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- letter from San Francisco Bay Chapter to a movie company about vandalism they did in a cave while filming.
- a new NSS A/V listing.
- the usual exchanges.
- letter from Dixie Pierson forwarding a letter from a Mr. Simmon who has been doing animal research in Bat Cave. Ray sent him a copy of our last bat count.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Eastern Nevada: Neils wants to contact the Great Basin NP to do some work for them. We will visit Goshute and Old Man Caves.
- Don Quinton was called out of Pinnacle Cave for a mine rescue.
- We are on the mailing list to be informed when power line construction begins over Sunbeam Pit.
- joint meeting June 30 with the Jefferson State Grotto. Climbing practice.
- Neils asked about the possibilities of doing a caving display at the Sisson Museum (Mt. Shasta). Ray will get the exhibit scheduled.

Minutes June 1, 1990 - Present: Neils Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Bill & Judy & kids Broeckel, Jay Swofford.

Chairman Neils Smith called the meeting to order. Minutes accepted as read. Treasurer reported a balance of \$333.54.

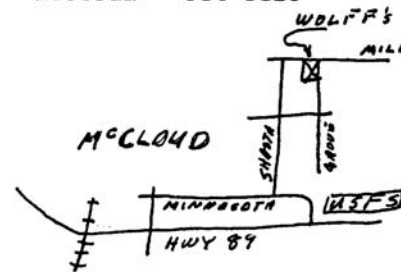
OLD BUSINESS:

- Jim W. told of a Memorial Day trip to Devil's Rock on Shasta Lake where they couldn't find a known pit. They did find lots of limestone, tho.
- SAG needs to get legal with the registers & the USFS. We have to share data with them.
- Jay had a correction to grylloblatids: they have been found in limestone ice caves near lava ice caves.

NEW BUSINESS

- next meeting June 29th at Wolffs' (regular date is during the convention). Climb practice with Jefferson State Grotto June 30th. August meeting at trailhead to Scorpion Cave, then do Scorpion on Saturday. Jay may even go caving. Directions below.

JULY SAG MEETING EARLY: June 29th,
 7:30 PM, at Wolff's, 6 Mill Road,
 McCloud. 964-3123



AUGUST SAG MEETING: August 10th,
 7:30 PM. A camp out near Scorpion Cave. Caving the next day. This limestone cave is located off the paved forest road between Happy Camp, CA and O'Brian, OR. A map was not available by the RAG deadline, but if those interested will call Ray Miller, 926-2440, or send him a post card at P.O.B. 475, Mt. Shasta 96067, a map will be provided. Due to the cost of postage. Maps will be sent only to those requesting one.

"Theerrreeee's a Hole in the"

Memorial Weekend Eastern Nevada Trip
by Liz Wolff

Those who joined the SAG field trip to Ely, Nevada, traded rain for sunshine and caves. We, Ray Miller and Liz Wolff, left not too early Wednesday morning with rain/sun/wind/snow all the way to Fallon where we camped for the night. There Jim and Bea Kottinger caught up with us. The next day we crossed a white Nevada to sunny Ely. We set up a posh camp at the local KOA for the comfort of Ray's mom, Nell Schilling, who went along for the ride. There all the amenities of home were available to us.

Thursday afternoon intriguing rocks on the opposite hillside drew our attention and some time was spent in trying to find a route to them that didn't take us through someone's yard, or leave us an unimproved railroad crossing. Ray's new van didn't want to take too many bumps too soon! Finally we found the right trail, and the big black hole in the fine grained marble boulder was actually two chunks of rock leaning against each other. Spray paint and broken glass sparkled all around. From the hillside we could see what appeared to be an abandoned rail yard, and we back-tracked down to it. There we found part of the yard was active, and they had a railroad museum. We ended the day in the hills trying to find garnets in the dark.

Friday morning was spent waiting for Neils Smith to arrive, photographing trains, museum hopping and looking for garnets again with slightly better success than the night before. At lunchtime Neils showed up, and the crew was complete. The afternoon was spent looking at huge granite charcoal kilns shaped like beehives. These were used to make charcoal for the copper smelters. There was also time for a trip to Cave Lake. An intriguing name on the map, Cave Lake is a body of water surrounded by limestone. The road past the lake is called "Success Loop", and it took us an awful long time to complete the tour. As soon as

we got started someone would call out, "There's a HOLE!" and we would stop to view it through Ray's 500mm lens. Thar's holes in them thar hills, and someday we'll have to go back and check them out.

Saturday we were out early, and Jim, Neils and Liz were on their way to Old Man Cave near the Utah/Nevada border. We had no trouble finding the cave and entered about 11 AM. The Entrance area was dry and dusty with smoke blackened walls. Not far inside the passage divided into an upper and lower level.

The lower level sloped steeply down to a 20' drop, complete with antique wooden ladder that sagged under weight. It ended in a room with a breakdown block that made it appear to be two passages. A short break was taken while Neils tried to get his sputtering carbide lamp to work properly.

Back in the upper level, we encountered another pit, complete with ladders, and crossed it to the continuation of the passage. Soon we came to an area that had seen some heavy vandalism to aid access. Sodastraws and small stalactites had nearly blocked the passage, but a by-pass goes around them. Vandals had broken through the pretties to avoid a crawl. The room behind the broken formations has weirdly sculptured walls and time was spent photographing there. We found some calcite crust flaking off the ceiling in one area. While Jim and Liz took pictures Neils took another shot at fixing his sputtering, gasping lamp.

From the formations we looked for a short upper level crawlway that has the rock'n'roll band, a modern mud sculpture on a ledge in an obscure place. It was too obscure. We didn't find it. We did find some pristine crystal lined crawlways that it was a shame to take our clumsy dusty bodies into, so we left.

On the way out we were met by lights coming into the first room. They belonged to Dale Green and Earl Peterson of the Salt Lake Grotto who were there to take pictures for a project. We discovered that a

Regional was taking place in one of the campgrounds at Lehman Cave, and that a large group would be at the cave in about an hour. While we talked Neils took his lamp apart again, and took some static about his carbide caving. Ah, the aroma of acetylene.

After leaving the cave, lunch, and finding Neils' watch (a laugh a minute) we had time to take a tour of Lehman Cave. All the tours were full for the day, so we went to see if we could find the cave Jim and Bea had seen while on their honeymoon several years ago. Touring all the campgrounds did nothing but use gas, so we gave up and promptly found the cave. In the cave we met some Arizona cavers up for the regional and toured Upper and Lower Pictograph Caves with them.

The upper cave has a huge square entrance that narrows quickly to a 20' wide by 40' high passage 100' long. It is dirt floored and ends in a breakdown almost totally blocking the crawl. Impassable to all but rats. The wonderful part was that Neils' lamp was now working perfectly. Lower Pictograph is a large dirt floored shelter that slopes down to the back and to low dusty crawlways where there are supposed to be pictographs. We found none.

One of the Arizonans showed us where the entrance to Ice Cave is located and told of the through trip they had taken in the Baker Creek Cave System. Another trip, one of tight climbs and water.

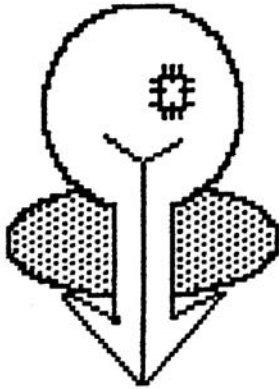
What is a long cave trip far from home without some disaster? On the way back to camp Jim's truck clunked, rattled and clanked, then thunked some and steamed. We found the belt to the water pump had self destructed and in the process bent the fan and punctured the radiator. Fortunately we had some lunch left to eat while waiting for the tow truck and/or Ray, whichever came first. It was a gorgeous sunset by the roadside. Jim had to spend two extra days in Ely fixing his truck.

Early Sunday Jim worked on removing the radiator from his truck while Neil, Ray and Liz went to Goshute Cave. It's quite a climb up to the huge entrance that can be seen from across the valley, but this is Rat Cave if the painted rock can be believed. Goshute is a small entrance to the side that can't be seen until you are on the same level.

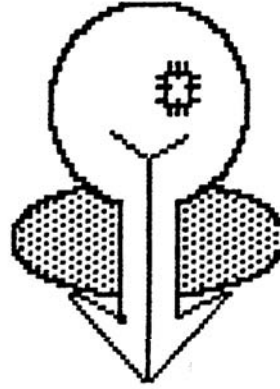
Just inside the entrance is a register which we all filled out. The entrance room is another weirdly sculptured one with a deep dust floor. Our first objective was the Dance Hall, a high-ceilinged room with many decorations on the walls. A low crawl, dust floored, led to the Robbers Roost that we passed up.

The next stop was the Bridal Chamber side room. On the way there the walls and ceiling are coated with white calcite in the shape of round balloons, called mammalaries. Beneath the edges of the walls were small columns and other formations. Helictites and crystalline formations adorned the entire wall. It took hours to travel to the end of the cave because Ray and Liz spent so much time goggle-eyed at all the wondrous formations. The Devils Slide was dry and easy to negotiate in both directions. The Liberty Bell, if one has a good imagination, is shaped like a bell. Someone had climbed on the ledge beside it and written their name on the stalactite above. The Moon Milk area near the end of the cave has been traveled over until it is hard to tell what was there to begin with, but it is still soft and mooshy. We attempted to do the Birth Canal, but Neils wouldn't fit, and the rest of us then passed. The shields are outstanding. Red against a white wall.

All in all, if one had unlimited time, light, film and a rubber bladder one could spend days taking pictures. Within a short distance of the entrance there are bare rock walls, but the rest of the cave is highly decorated.



What was I supposed to say?
Oh - ROCKS!!!



Sorry, Mam. If I had known
someone was down there I
wouldn't have done that.

The SAG RAG
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