

Published bi-monthly beginning in February by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editor is Claude A. Smith, at 131 Oleander Circle, Redding, CA, 96001.

The editor would like to thank Jim Wolff for his material included in the "Grotto Notes" column and his article on the Marbles. Also Joe Moulter's research inspired the articles on Tombstone. Last, but not least, many thanks to the editor's wife for her patience and help.

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.

COMING EVENTS

- November 6 Trip to Tombstone Mountain.
Will be some ridge-walking and digging in a sinkhole. See articles on pages 3 and 4. For information on where to meet and possible camping out call Wolffs at 964-2569. Trip may be cancelled due to snow.
- November 12 Grotto meeting.
At Claude and Mary Belle Smith's, 131 Oleander Circle, Redding, 246-3942. Will be slide show by Claude Smith and Joe Moulter after meeting. Bring your slides also.
- November ?? Battle Creek Cave No. 2.
Jim Wolff reports that the McCloud Reservoir is down, allowing entry into unchecked pits in this complex little limestone cave.
- December 10 Grotto meeting.
At Jim and Liz Wolff's, 6 Mill Rd, McCloud. Will probably be caving Saturday in Powder Hill Cave System or other local caves.
- Samwel cleanup project.
Dan Bryant, one of our newer cavers, has expressed an interest in cleaning up the graffiti in Samwel Cave. Let's give him our support and plan a cleanup trip soon.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the October meeting the following bylaw was established for election of officers:

- a. People may be nominated by two other voting members, either at a meeting or by correspondence to the Grotto mailing address.
- b. Ballots will be enclosed in the December grotto newsletter.
- c. Deadline for returning ballots is the January meeting. Ties will be resolved at the January meeting.

GROTTO NOTES

MARK & STEVE – The editor recently got a phone call from Eric Popoff in Wyoming. Has been caving with Mark Fritzke and Steve Knutsen in Columbine Crawl. Apparently Mark and Steve are still in Wyoming. Steve got a job surveying.

CAVE TRIP REPORT FORM – Jim reports that the grotto's new cave trip report form will be available at meetings for those who are interested. The intention is to have a handy form in which to plug in information gathered on a cave trip. Hopefully, this will eliminate duplication of efforts, while in the process of compiling a database on all of the caves we visit. Yes, even the well known ones.

POWDER HILL CAVE SYSTEM – Mapping continues in the complex Bobcat lava tube. Mapping is finished in Rooty Tooty. According to Liz, there is a good possibility of connecting a high lead in Bobcat thru the breakdown in the end of Orange Tape Cave. With the efforts of Peter Bosted and friends of the S.F.B.C., the Powder Hill Cave System has really turned into a highly complex (both vertically and horizontally) lava cave system. Peter comes up at least twice a year to map caves in this neat area. See Wolff for plans and dates of trips.

HARRIS MTN. CAVE – On Sept. 25th Don Quinton, Liz, Sara and Jim Wolff visited and mapped Harris Mtn. Cave. While in the process of exploring, an injured bat was found on the floor of the cave. The bat was still breathing and appeared to have been knocked off the ceiling by some malicious person or persons, just hours or the day before. Three sets of footprints were found in the sand near the bat. Only five or six other individual bats were observed in the cave. Three forms of cave critters were also sighted in a side branch of the cave.

OCTOBER MEETING – Had a good get-together with fellow cavers of the Eureka area at Dick and Cherry LaForge's. An excellent presentation was given by Lynn Clarke on "state of the art" vertical gear and electric lighting.

NEWSLETTER – Our newsletter is processed on an ALTOS microcomputer using OASIS operating system's SCRIPT editor. All copies are printed on a Datasouth DS-180 dot matrix printer. The Grotto has purchased a printer ribbon for \$8.95, which should last at least one year. Paper is charged to the Grotto at 1 cent per finished sheet, which includes the cost of spoiled copies. We probably won't be using Xerox copies much, because it costs 10 cents for two sided copies. We can mail a 7 sheet, 14 page issue for 20 cents.

NEW MEMBER – Don Quinton from Herlong (over by Reno) was signed up at the August meeting. Don is well known by the Wolffs and Smiths and has become quite active in grotto functions, in spite of the distance he has to travel. Welcome Don!!

REGIONALS – Claude attended this year's Western region near the Stanislaus River down south. Our grotto is now officially recognized as a member of the region. Our bid to host a Joint Northwest and Western Regional at Lake Shasta Labor Day weekend was also accepted!

AN INCIDENT IN THE MARBLES

by Jim Wolff

On August 14th, 1982 Arley Kisling and I took a trip into Roto Rooter Cave to check out the water level in the Sleaze Squeeze, a wet crawl near the furthest point of exploration.

Arley, having not been in the cave before, thought he would check the crawl first upon arrival. Since he didn't have a wetsuit, we agreed that he would determine whether or not we would continue on. He sized up the situation and determined that it wasn't all that wet and proceeded down the crawl. There is a point in the crawl where the downward sloping passage bottoms in a pool of water, maybe 6-8" deep with maybe 12-18" of ceiling crack above, which allows the caver a chance to stay out of the water. While bridging across the pool, Arley's cave pack got submerged in the pool and a great explosion occurred! The explosion knocked him off his position above the pool and into the water. His lamp was extinguished.

What happened, apparently, was the carbide dump bag he was carrying got wet and his lamp set off a carbide explosion. So in the dark he had to grope into his pack for his second source of light, an electric head lamp. The explosion had broken the lens to the light, but luckily, not the bulb. However, the battery pack was badly damaged as well, with a broken latch and hinge. The four batteries were found and assembled by wrapping the power cord around the battery pack to hold things together. This was all done before I could get to Arley with extra light.

Arley was pretty shaken by the incident and, with soaked clothes and two now questionable sources of light, we decided to exit the cave.

ANALYSIS:

When dealing with a wet cave, always have spent carbide bag double or triple wrapped in plastic bags and possibly stored in a waterproof or semi-waterproof pack. (One should always be aware of the potential bomb we carry around!) How many times have you peeked into your cave pack for something and used your carbide for the search?!

TOMBSTONE MOUNTAIN

The editor copied the following from a letter dated May 17, 1956, to Dr. W.R. Halliday, from George R. Schrader of the Shasta National Forest, Mount Shasta.

"In the matter of Tombstone Mountain, Ranger Crouch of Mount Shasta and myself would be happy to assist in the exploration of this cave with any of your crew next July. The only information concerning it that I have is from a very reliable source, Rev. Henry Rische who is now located in St. Louis was lowered some 100 feet into this cave. He is a very busy man, being editor of This Day Magazine. However, I am sure he would tell you of his expedition if asked. You might mention that I had referred you to him. Address Rev. Henry Rische, Editor, This Day Magazine, 3558 So. Jefferson, St. Louis, 8, Mo."

MORE ON TOMBSTONE and others
(Reprint: Caves of Shasta County)

This article was originally titled "Caves of Shasta County" by Rosena A. Giles. Joe Moulter found it in a Redding Museum's 1978 reprint of the Shasta Historical Society's May – June – July 1944 issue of "The Covered Wagon."

He sat under the shadow of the tall limestone cliffs known to man in later ages, as the Grey Rocks, a lonely majestic figure gazing ever toward the north. His heels and colossal body, where had sat long, made depressions even in the solid rock. It was his moment of rest after his labors, though his heart was filled with a vast unrest.

He, the Great Spirit, had builded up the white mountain until its crest touched heaven's door. He had stepped out onto it and had slid down its icy side to the barren earth that had long waited insentient for his coming. He had made the rivers flow, the ground blossom, filled the air and waters with birds and fishes for man whom he had created to people the earth.

Many moons he had sat there while the yellow ball of fire crept over the sky and stepped down behind the mountains. This hour he waited for.

Far to the north out of the dark heavens rose a beautiful maiden with flowing hair and face shining like the dawn. In his heart he had named her Waida-Weri, which means the North Star, and as the flame of his desire burned fiercer in him he longed mightily for her and called her to come down to him. But she always refused, shaking her shining head until her whole body twinkled in the blue vault; and the sun came up again and she faded from his sight.

His desire for her grew and the creative instinct in him stirred. He would build a palace for her more beautiful than anything he had yet conceived. Fired with the idea, he rose and the mountain trembled from the mighty strokes of his stone sledge, stroke after stroke until a great crack ran crookedly through the limestone shafts. They jostled against each other and fell in chaotic piles, leaving gigantic holes along the fissure track where the huge fragments failed to fit together.

The super mason leaned on his sledge, looked at his work and called it good. Many chambers, large and small, opened out in many directions, and his vision ran ahead planning, planning --

He called upon the rain gods, the He rain that plunges in fierce torrents to fill the rivers, and the She rain which comes in soft mist to freshen the grass. He called upon the snow, the sun, the soil and the winds, and gave to each a part to help him in his great work.

The raindrop multitudes brought elements from the air, sun sprites coaxed the snow to seep through the soil down over the broken segments and each minute servant brought a tiny particle of limestone element, fastening it to the walls and ceilings. Yet some fell to the floors, some hid in the crevices, the winds whisked them from place to place as the Master artisan directed, until the rooms were ornamented with beautiful fantasies, painted in glowing colors. Wonderful pillars held the music of wind and waters, of birds and the mating calls of the wild.

Reprint: Caves of Shasta County (continued)

He freed thousands of raindrops from their baser elements and gathered them together in clear pools to mirror the glowing eyes of Waida-Weri and cool her shining limbs.

Through the moons and suns of ages he labored. Still Waida-Weri held aloof, but the Ground Sloth and the Short-faced Bear of the Quaternary period, crept in to find a lair, bringing in their prey; and afterward laid down their skeletons to become curiosities of the ages. Species of Condor and Sooty Grouse, Cougar and Rattlesnakes and many rodents left their bones to man's discovery.

After a long measure of time, man came with rope ladders and torches to conquer the depths and darkness; and the caverns began to yield up their treasures. They were given names, Potters Creek, Samwel, and Stoneman; instead of being mere legends they were identified by exploration and description. Gaining access by difficult means and descending into the subterranean depths on rope ladders, J.A. Richardson, who discovered Potters Creek Cave in 1878, wrote his name indelibly on the cavern wall and gave its location among the Grey Rocks along Potters Creek, a short distance from the juncture of McCloud and Pit Rivers in Shasta County.

Here he and his party found the Great Spirit's work in a huge dark chamber, in many chambers containing enormous stalactites thirty feet long, large enough for pillars, graduating to fragile pencils delicate as pipe stems, amber colored and purple, glittering like diamonds in the lantern glow. Here gigantic curtain-like folds of translucent rock responded to the touch with deep, melodious music. Numerous alcoves and balconies ranged around the walls which were covered with stalactite formations suggesting creations of fairyland, dyed in unbelievably brilliant hues and embedded with crystals scintillating in the artificial light.

Awe and curiosity followed as feet stumbled against fossil bones of animal species that had long ceased to walk the earth; along with thousands of lime-encrusted bones and fragments of later origin. Other men came and the Great Spirit stood by unseen, watching them search among these fauna for evidences to identify the age of his work. He felt a pride in their pronouncement of its being the Quaternary period which matched the same period of fauna found in well known caves of the old world. He knew they searched also for knowledge of the earliest period of man's presence in this section. While they found fragments suggesting, but not giving positive proof of man's presence, they conceded these caves furnished the most satisfactory representation of the Quaternary fauna that has yet been discovered in any one section.

Samwel cave is smaller and more easy of access and yields fauna fossils of later date, yet of the same period, as those in Potters Creek cave. Samwel was discovered four years earlier by Livingstone Stone of the Baird Salmon Hatchery, and founder of the Salmon hatching experiments in California. The name is of Indian origin, meaning "Spirit water."

The Great Spirit smiled at man-told tales of wealth hidden in the caves by robber bandits, knowing them to be mere rumors, and the legend of an Indian maid who went in to bathe in the pools and was carried away by Spirits, was explained to man by the discovery of her lime encrusted skeleton, and later buried by members of her tribe.

Reprint: Caves of Shasta County (continued)

He watched as exploration of these caves was carried on in 1902-3 by E.R. Furlong, of the Calif. Ins. Of Technology of Pasadena, and Dr. Wm. J. Sinclair. These are but a few of many such caves, most of them still unexplored, in Shasta County.

He knows that recently a construction worker, F.J. House, reported the discovery of a cave in the Mt. Shasta region, about ten miles N.E. of the Hazel Creek post office, which, in his opinion, rivals the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. It is located on the north side of Tombstone Mountain at 5100 feet elevation. The Indian guide said Mr. House was the first white man to enter the cave though he had known the cave for more than fifty years.

By means of ropes they lowered themselves down about two hundred feet into a large chamber and could see several more such chambers, by flashlight. This seems to be a very hospitably arranged cave although the front parlor is two hundred feet straight down and pitch dark before the visitor reaches a room large enough to hold three hundred people. On the sides are many small alcoves leading in, and, according to the Indian's report has "pretty benches" to sit on. This might be very welcome after the two hundred foot drop. The Indian guide said after the first drop it is "still down."

These caves are now accessible only by hiking, but when the broad water is spread into the mountain canyons they will easily be reached by boat and will, no doubt, be the Mecca of the wandering men who speed here and there like wild horses on the plain. For the Great Spirit still labors, still commands his willing servants for greater building, perhaps still longing for Waida-Weri the inspiration of his dream palaces come true, and as he looks into the deep water he will see her there, when the water is calm and unruffled, lying on its bosom.

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