

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. Membership dues (including newsletter) are \$6, due January 1, and prorated by quarter. Newsletter subscriptions are \$6/year, due January 1, and prorated by quarter.

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MEETING

March 1991 meeting held at Wolff's in McCloud. Present: B Broeckel, J & L Wolff, R Miller, J & B Kottinger, N Smith. Minutes not read. Treasurers report: \$330.51.

Correspondence: Received letter from the USFS with agreement for the use of Harris Springs

Old Business: – Regional: Jim W says Ken Laidlaw will coordinate a rescue class with the Shasta & Lassen Co S & R's at the regional.

– Museum: The grand opening will be Mar. 13, 1991, with the display up for at least 1 year. Extra funds for the display will be used to put out a 'generic' RAG to complement the exhibit.

New Business: – Jim W discussed plans for a 10th anniversary issue of the RAG.

– Ray Miller will edit May/June SAG RAG.

– Jim W will talk about caves to the USFS.

MINUTES

April 1991 meeting held at Kottinger's in Mt Shasta. Present: J & B Kottinger, B Broeckel, J & L Wolff, R Miller, N Smith, D & G Reel. Treasurers report: \$334.58.

Correspondence: – Ray submitted a copy of a thank you letter to Dixie for slide copies.

– Jim W read the NSS response to our letter about caving video quality. They appreciated our input.

Old Business: – Dick LaForge hasn't submitted any bills for the SAG exchange reviews yet.

– Regional: No rescue demo, but there may be a rescue program. Costs so far are small for the regional. Liz will come up with a logo.

– Ray passed around copies of the 'generic' RAG from the museum exhibit.

New Business: – Bill read an invite from the Jefferson State Grotto to attend their May 7 meeting with Dr. Stephen Cross on bats.

– Interest is great to have another Oregon Caves restoration clean up trip.

– May meet at Reel's in Weed; June at Hat Creek.

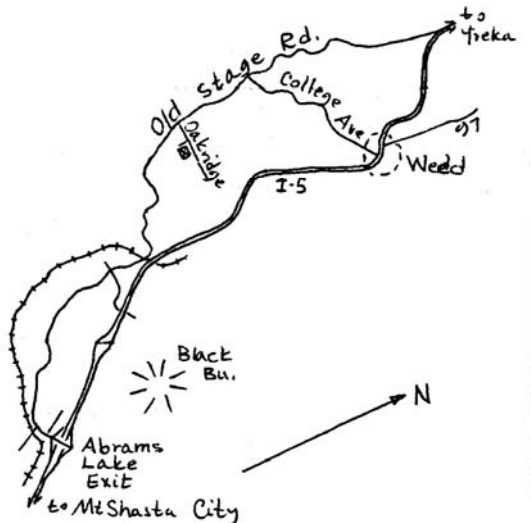
CAVERS CALENDAR

May 7 7:00 pm. Jefferson State Grotto Meeting, see article elsewhere.

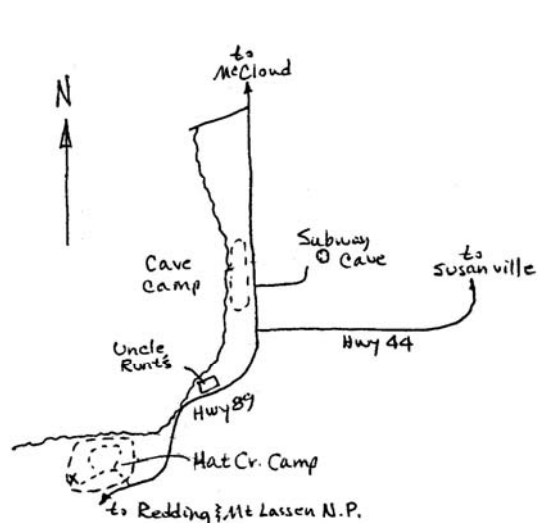
May 24-27 Memorial Day Speleo-Ed Seminar, Berkeley-Tuolumne Camp in the Sierras.

September 27-29 Western Regional Meeting. Harris Springs Campground. Hosted by SAG

May 10 Grotto meeting at Reel's
938-4078. 7908 Oakridge, Weed.



June 8 Grotto meeting at Hat Creek Campground,
about mile south of Hwy 89 and 44 junction.



Jefferson State Grotto Activities

Marc Sorenson, JSG grotto chairman invites SAG to join their activities in the next few months. We've had a rope practice and done some caving with them. Their main contact is Marc Sorensen (503) 535-1265, or call Bob Harvey (503) 488-1355, for the latest in grotto happenings. The following are their scheduled events:

- May 7th, 7 pm BATS – A talk and slide show by Dr. Steve Crass. Meet at the Lazy Boy Showcase, 3424 So. Pacific Hiway, Medford, OR. Call Marc Sorenson ASAP for details.
- May 11th, Cave Hunt They plan to check a limestone area, snow conditions allowing.
- June sometime Scorpion Cave. A weekend exploring the cave and cave hunting as well.
- July 12th, Kangaroo Mtn. This fine karst area has many known caves. Could we make this a joint grotto meeting/campout?

Bill Broeckel's Cave Wanderings

Windy Cave The historical article in the March 6, 1991 "Voice of the Mountain" helped us find this cave. So did talking to grotto members. And sure enough, it proved to be a good cave for little kids. We explored from the warm wind at the entrance, 220 feet to the end of the cave. There we found a sleeping porcupine, and woke him up. He took one look at us, poked his head into a hole and bristled. It wasn't like we were going to try and move him or anything. Later on we went back to check on the porcupine. He was gone, but now a bunny rabbit had taken his place. His eyes glowed red in the beams of our lights. Maybe the porcupine put on his rabbit disguise.

Marble Mountains Speaking of cave animals, an article from the March 18, 1991 Siskiyou Daily News which will be of interest to cavers dreaming of the Marbles:
 "We knew nobody would believe such a wild story." (This was regarding some extra large bigfoot tracks found while hiking near McGuffy Cr.) "We're just not the type to jump to wild conclusions," said Jean [Hamilton]. But 81 year old Curly Hamilton who claims to have seen it all at one time or another, knew these strange tracks were different from anything he had ever witnessed before. He explained that there are many caves and tunnels in the high Marble Mountains beyond. "Perhaps this creature, whatever it is, was headed for one of these," he said.

'So beware Marble Mountain cavers, and consider yourselves fairly warned. Hey, isn't one of those caves named "Bigfoot"???

NEWS FROM GROTTO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Bill Broeckel participated in a Jefferson State Grotto Oregon Caves cleanup recently.
- Eleven Mother Lode Grotto people showed up over April 20-21 weekend to do some lava tube caves. We had eleven cavers show up and there were three caves visited the day we helped out. Ray Miller, Jim Kottinger, Jim and Liz Wolff showed them Shovel and Four Balcony Pit Caves, plus several more entrances. They will be back someday to help out in mapping the Freudian Complex. They look forward to the Western Regional we are hosting too.

NOTICE

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To all grottos: Send all newsletter exchanges to Dick LaForge, 450 Redmond Rd, Eureka, CA 95501.

To all grotto members: Ray Miller will be editing the May/June 1991 edition of the SAG RAG. Send all contributions to him at: POBox 475, Mt Shasta CA 96067, by the middle of June.

NEWSCLIPS

Saving a Legendary Cave – San Francisco Chronicle 3/11/91. This article is about Bower Cave. Once named "Marble Springs Cave", it once was a commercial cave.

Hayfork Hiker Dies From Fall Near Hyampom – Record Searchlight (Redding, CA) 2/18/91

"A 23 year-old Hayfork man died Saturday after he slipped and fell 90 feet on a sheer rock cliff. The man was hiking above Indian Valley and Butter Creek caves when he slipped."

Newsletter Reviews by Dick LaForge

Vol 24 #4 Devil's Advocate (Diablo Grotto) of Walnut Creek CA has two trip reports from a March 1991 Guads (Guadalupe Mtns, N.M.) trip. You should go caving in the Guads sometime in your life. You'll die a whole lot happier (if not sooner) if you do.

The SFBC Newsletter Vol 34 #3 has an excellent article by Cindy Heazlit on an all-purpose rappel device, the brake bar rack. Its only drawback is its size and weight. Vol 34 #2 has a similar article on the figure 8, which is useful for shorter drops. The full articles will be available at the grotto meetings or by mail.

Vol 10 #3 of the Underground Express (Willamette Valley Grotto) has an article on Apogee Cave and the major breakthrough made this last year, by Cynthia Ream. The Marble Mountains keep coming up with good new surprises. They also advertise the Northwest Caving Association convention May 24-27, hosted by the Cascade Grotto. Contact Jim Harp, 206-745-1010. Northwest events are not out of reach for SAG cavers; see some new lava tubes.

From the My Cave's Bigger Than Your Cave Dept: A controversy begun this last summer about whose cave is bigger continues with the KMCTF and Lilburns cavers taking pot shots at each other in their newsletters. Bigfoot Cave is longer with 12.5 miles, Lilburns Cave trails at 12.46, but both have been passed up by IXL Cave near Santa Cruz at 14.2 miles, as reported in the SFBC Newsletter Vol 34 #4, making it a moot point (April Fools to all!)*

* Correction (from issue 10(3) – pdf ed.): "... an apology is due to Dick for a comment that should have been attributed to the editors of the RAG itself, in his newsletter reviews. We are very sorry for any misunderstandings that may arise from this statement. And lastly, there is no ongoing argument between Lilburn and KMCTF cavers (and as far as we are concerned, the matter is finished!)"

1991 Membership List

Broeckel, Bill MD	31702	524 Annie St, Yreka CA 96097	(916)842-3917
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Henderson, Phylis	25330	14500 Kenney Ave, Red Bluff CA 96080	(916)527-7513
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Kottinger, Jim	26621	1922 Highland Dr, Mt Shasta CA 96067	(916)926-3975
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LaForge, Kathy	32171	450 Redmond Rd, Eureka CA 95501	(707)443-2626
LaForge, Seth	22159	450 Redmond Rd, Eureka CA 95501	(707)443-2626
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McGahey, Bill	31128	18508 W Fk Evans Cr Rd, Rogue River OR 97537	(503)826-9272
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Quinton, Don	18354	1121 Teton Dr, Barstow CA 92311	(619)252-8615
Reel, Dorothy	31877	7908 Oak Ridge Rd, Weed CA 96094	(916)938-4078
Reel, George	31876	7908 Oak Ridge Rd, Weed CA 96094	(916)938-4078
Smith, Neils	23836	721-155 Alexander Way, Standish CA 96128	(916)254-6764
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Wolff, Liz	11701	P O Box 865, McCloud CA 96057	(916)964-3123

* = not current NSS member

1991 Grotto officers:

Chairman, Neils Smith Vice chairman, Jim Kottinger
Secretary, Dorothy Reel Treasurer, Ray Miller

Emily's Spring Break Caving Plans Change – Observations of a Litter Bearer by Dick LaForge

Saturday March 30 was the first day of the Spring Expedition at Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park, New Mexico. Mark Rosbrook, Charles Festerson (of Sonora), and I arrived at the Cave Research Foundation (CRF) cabins late that day, and planned on a 6-person trip to the Far East section of the cave. We were excited about the four day trip, as this part of the cave would be new to us and we knew many leads awaited us.

Then, around noon Sunday Dave Jones came running up saying that Emily Davis Mobley had fallen and broken her leg sometime early Sunday morning. Her team had been exploring in the FUBAR passage, which is at the beginning of the Western Borehole. Dave had been part of another team that was also in the Western Borehole. This sounded serious, the sort of thing we knew would happen sooner or later, but didn't want to think about. All plans were forgotten to prepare to do whatever needed to be done.

Within a few hours Mark and Tim Harrison were sent down with medical and other supplies with little being known of Emily's condition. Steven Mosberg MD was with her at the time of the accident. His report, sent out with Dave, was that the injury was physically stable and that time would not be a major factor in the evacuation. Later Peter & Ann Bosted, Glen Malliet, and I were sent down with a rigid SKED stretcher and instructions to measure all tight spots and the great White Way (vertical), then send out written recommendations. We were to start moving Emily as soon as possible. More people would be sent down later. Peter & Ann had photo gear with them and documented the rescue. As it turned out I stayed with the stretcher and Emily from the accident site to her exit early Thursday morning, April 4.

This is my personal impression of the slow-but-sure four day journey. It is not intended to be an official accident report. The trip down was slow, but the SKED was not a major problem. It comes apart across the middle with the front and back halves nested together for easy carrying. We noted only two places where the assembled stretcher would not fit. The extremely rough and chaotic terrain from the bottom of the Great White Way to the ABC Room would be tough. Also places in the Rift where the floor is missing. Along the way we met with members of Emily's team who assured us that Emily was basically OK.

We arrived at the end of the Great White Way around midnight where Tim and Mark were camped. They said that the pain killers were allowing Emily, and therefore Steve, to sleep. We would go on in the morning. So we found some more or less level spots along the powdery gypsum snow trail where we hit the sack. A few hours later another team with Jim Goodbar, a cave rescue expert, came into camp.

The next morning we made our way up the steep FUBAR passage which leaves the ABC near our camp. We were apprehensive as we neared Emily's camp, which was by the site of her fall. We could see right away that Emily was in good spirits and was being well taken care of. Fortunately there were some large flat rocks upon which the group had made themselves reasonable comfortable. We entertained her with a battery powered, squeaking, flashing bat we had swiped from the Speleobooks shelf in the CRF cabin.

The offending hole was an ordinary 10-12 foot deep pit in the floor of the sort that cavers encounter all the time. The problem was a large (80 lb?) part of the edge which thought its third use as a handhold was one too many. Two members of her party had used it before she had.

She was wrapped in a semi-rigid body splint, then positioned in the SKED, padded for protection, then laced and strapped in. A foot loop was put on her good foot to keep her weight off the broken leg when she would be vertical; an arrangement that worked well.

We were apprehensive when we lifted the SKED and made an easy carry over large boulders to the top of the steep slope. Most of us, including myself, had never been in even a practice rescue before and had no real idea how it would go. Emily was more practiced, having served as a victim in a pretend rescue! As we carried her to the first drop and carefully slid her down, we met the techniques we would use many times during the next three days.

All travel in Lechuguilla is on narrow marked trails to keep the rest of the floor undamaged, so all moves were planned in advance to support the stretcher and end in a place to set it down horizontally. Bearers then passed the stretcher to take up new positions ahead, with occasionally a person being a "turtle" and standing in a hole passing the stretcher over their head. Otherwise we carried it three on a side where passages permitted. Rope hauling systems were used for the many vertical sections. Three ropes were used. A haul rope went to the front of the SKED, with an attendant clipped to it to guide it past obstacles. Separate belay ropes went to the SKED and the guide. Needless to say, careful communication was needed to keep all three ropes coordinated.

In this first day of travel we were relatively independent, devising riggings on the spot. We felt self-sufficient and isolated from the outside world. This was soon to change. The rescue had become a media event as shown by an article in an El Paso newspaper brought in by a relief party. The people on the surface had very little idea of our progress, though it was sure and steady. We spent the night in the Deep Secrets Room, knowing that Tuesday would be a big day spent lifting, passing and turtling into the Rift.

Morning brought more people and the first of the heavy-duty rigging systems devised by a man flown in for the purpose. From here on the drops and traverses would all be rigged ahead of us. The plan at the Great White Way was to raise Emily up through some obscure holes in the ceiling to avoid the tight slanty passages on the usual route. It took some time to get the haul system working properly. A radio or telephone line here would have been useful. Unfortunately I didn't see the rigging as it was dismantled by the time I got up to it.

Once in the Rift the ambience of the rescue was quite different. There were many more people, some of them with no clearly defined duties. MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) were in abundance as were plastic wrappers, and water had been hauled in 5 gallon containers and stationed at intervals. We became more aware of the national news coverage of the rescue and the amount of activity on the surface Wednesday morning when a phone line reached us in camp at the E-F junction. Emily gave a brief interview with prearranged questions there.

It seemed we could make it out that day since progress had been more rapid than expected. Emily was getting tired of being laced into the stretcher, but didn't complain and was in good spirits the entire time. Shortly after getting moving we were met by Dave Modisette with a video camera on loan from Sony. Seeing the cave with the video light was worth the whole trip.

Progress was rapid all the way to the bottom of Boulder Falls. More than 30 cavers were at Boulder Falls to light it as Emily rose to the sound of cheering from below. Litter bearing was to be taken over by a mine rescue unit from the top of Boulder Falls to the entrance, but they were busy with riggings and the regulars made it through the entrance pipe with her. The last lifts and passes were done with finesse and style.

The entrance lift was most spectacular with the SKED looking like a canoe rising horizontally against the starry night sky. On the surface newsmen with TV cameras were interviewing the leaders of the rescue and trying to make sense of an experience beyond their experience, for people who are in the same position. I arrived on the surface in time to see Emily loaded into the ambulance. [Dick's full treatment of the rescue is available to anyone who is interested in reading it. – eds]

Some Notes and Conclusions:

What happened to Emily could happen to anyone. Cave exploring is hazardous. Any caver must be ready to be rescued or to help rescue someone else. Mental preparation is important and helped this rescue to go smoothly. It is fortunate that time was not a factor and an MD was there. It would be helpful if the expedition leaders were aware of the location of all medically trained personnel, either on the surface or underground. Excellent leadership during the rescue can teach the untrained the tools and techniques of cave rescue. A cheerful sense of humor can keep all those around, including the rescue team, in good spirits. It helped that Emily had female companionship throughout the rescue.

On part of the route there were many more people than were necessary in the cave. Yet some of the jobs such as carrying gear and clean up were not well done. A person with authority to manage the more peripheral people would have helped. Some damage was done to the cave since most trails are too narrow for three to go side by side. Some chiseling was done to enlarge very tight spots, and a few loose blocks were moved. The excess of people caused some wear and tear.*

The Park Service took very good care of us, renting a room in White City and feeding us. To our surprise we were paid for our time during the rescue and clean up afterward. We are to be compensated for lost equipment. Three cheers for the Park Service!

Last and most important, the rescue was a success. Maybe we don't value our friends enough, until faced with the possibility of losing them.

* Correction (from issue 10(3) – pdf ed.): “In Dick LaForge's Lechuguilla Cave Rescue article several errors were made while editing his article for length, even though it was very good reading. Apologies to Dick for making it seem that they had done things that would have destroyed some very delicate areas of the cave. The rescuers did not destroy any delicate areas, and we are sorry that it may have seemed so to our readers. ... [T]he rescuers did not camp in any delicate areas of the cave; only one place was chiseled to provide passage for the stretcher.”

The SAG RAG

c/o Jim and Liz Wolff
P.O. Box 865
McCloud, CA 96057

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

TO:

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