

Sag Rag

SHASTA AREA GROTTO NEWSLETTER NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1998 VOLUME 17 NUMBER 1



Dave Prior on rope during a search and rescue vertical practice at Castle Craggs State Park.

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Grotto meetings are held at different locations the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. Original material not otherwise noted is copyright to the SAG RAG. Such material may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG. For use outside of the caving community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication any time to Bighorn Broeckel, 2916 Deer Meadows Road, Yreka, CA 96097. Material intended for the next newsletter is due by the 10th of the even month.

EDITORIAL: This issue remembers Dave Pryor and his contribution to caving in Northern California. Jim Wolff brings us Dave's obituary in the aftermath of his sudden and untimely death last summer. The picture on the cover was traced from a news photo taken by Brad Garrison and published in the Sept. 1, 1996 Redding Record Searchlight. The article describes how Dave devoted much of his time to cave conservation.

Regarding Oregon Caves, a new plan is up for review, and comments are needed by March 12. Steve Knutson offers some suggestions, and these can be submitted by post or computer, or even in person at Oregon Caves. Those responsible for getting out the Rag are working hard to mail this issue in time for everybody to send in their comments.

My cave trips lately have been limited to Christmas Tree Cave, which has been expanding lately and still holds a promising lead.

The 1997 Siskiyou Pioneer about the history of McCloud has been published 100 years after the incorporation of the McCloud River Railroad. There were five cave references: Mayfield Ice Caves (p.21), air flows from a well drilled at Mountain House (p.32), a 12 year old girl finds an old Indian cave (p.104), a lime pit at Pig Creek (p.130), and Arthur Roy Johnson explores ice caves (p.138). So on to more caving/reading . . .

BB

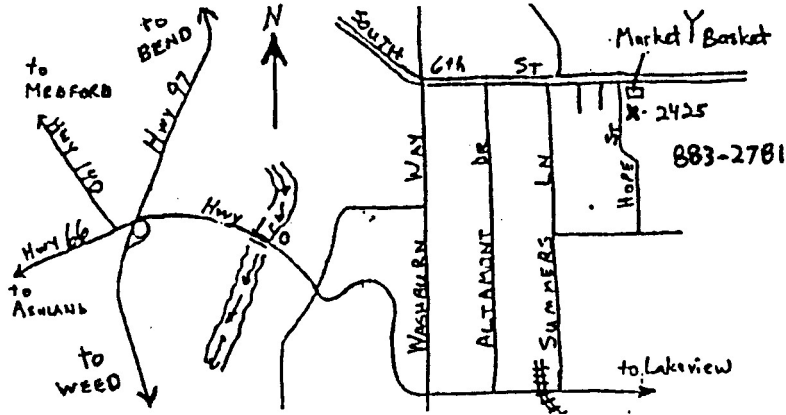


Pluto Cave gets a new sign.

CAVE CALENDAR – 1998

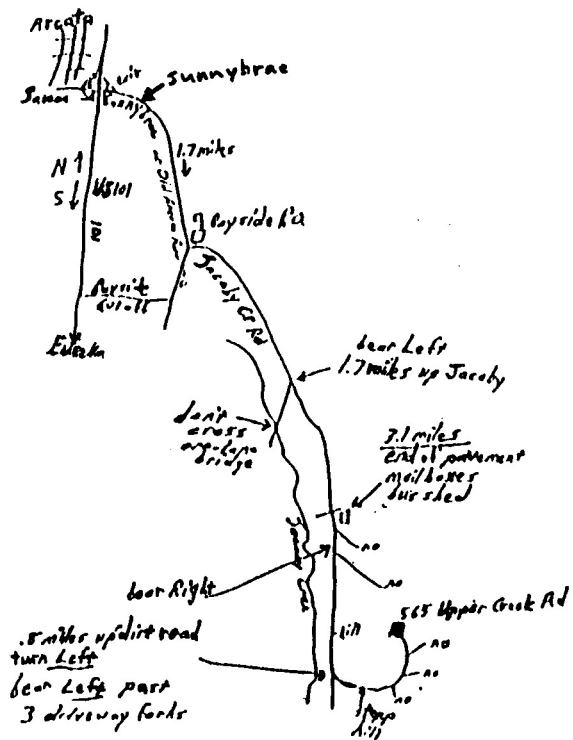
Mar. 13

SAG meeting 7:30 PM at Kenney's home in Klamath Falls.
Possible follow-up trip to No-Name Cave.



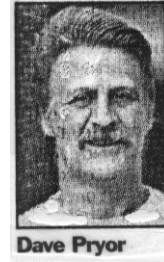
Apr. 4

SAG meeting 7:00 PM at Fritzke-Villatorre's home in Arcata.
Please call (707) 822-8566 to make personal arrangements.



OBITUARY By Jim Wolff

David James Pryor NSS 38237
 Caver and friend to many
 born 2/23/52 and passed into God's Hands 7/19/97

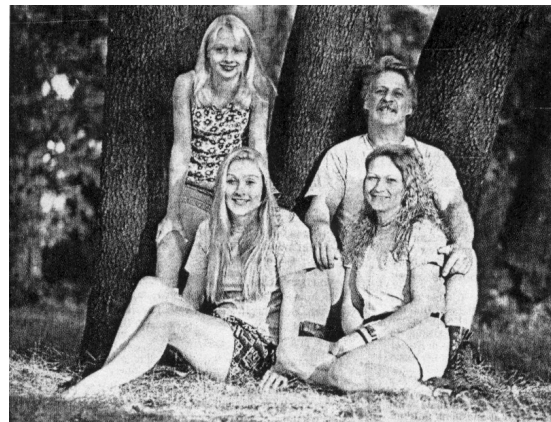
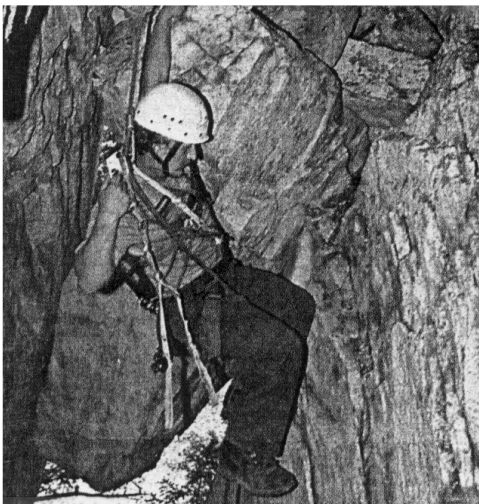


It is always hard to say good-bye to a friend, especially one that has meant much to you, the caving community and the caves we explore. This is the story of Dave Pryor as I knew him.

His enthusiasm was contagious and his energy was unbeatable! He wanted everyone to enjoy the wonder and beauty of caves. He was a team player. He was safety conscious, and honest – always! He loved his family and his friends. He is survived by his wife Ellen Nielson, daughters Chavon and April Dawn, his parents and a brother.

He was the spark plug for a lot of the caving activity in the Redding area. He was the founder of the Shascade Caving Society (SCS) and was President as long as the grotto has existed. He was a member of SAG as well. He trained new Grotto members' skills and attitudes. He insisted on a certain loyalty to cave conservation, ethics and rules, minimizing evidence of our passing by leaving no trace.

When we first met, he had been caving ten years. He and his friends had combed the limestone near Shasta Lake, and found many caves. During his early years of "spelunking" he discovered a new room in Shasta Caverns that he called the Crystal Room. It was later added to the tourist route that we now see. He put hours into the design and improvement of cave gates. Two caves in the Shasta Lake area contain his gates. He repaired the Samwel Cave gate several times after break-ins. He believed in the system and was willing to cooperate with the FS to manage caves. This was evidenced by the results of his diplomatic efforts to get the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act implemented. During the first round of nominations Dave submitted over thirty caves for the FS listing of Significant Caves.



Prior with his family, from left, April Dawn Pryor, Chavon Pryor and Ellen Nielsen.

Dave was not one to brag, but there were times he'd approach me (with the grin he had when something neat had happened) and say that SCS had accomplished this or that with the FS. To me, it meant a great accomplishment for FS/caver relations, adding credibility to our position. During their early years, SCS made up a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFS Shasta Lake district giving SCS cooperation and some financial support for cave projects on the Forest. He led SCS' involvement in several projects, such as the restoration of Potter Creek Cave entrance room.

The shelter entrance of the cave had holes in the floor, left after an early-day archaeological excavation. Dave felt this would encourage casual visitors to pothunt the remainder. With the blessing and supervision of the Shasta/Trinity National Forest Archaeologist, cavers backfilled the holes and then remapped the cave.

The old saying, "Getting there was half the fun" certainly applies to Dave! He took his family along nearly everywhere he went. And getting there might have included even some scuba diving. He was Dive Master certified before he pushed Hall City Cave to a third airbell. He wanted to be able to map it as he went, so he turned around and followed his line out.

Many other characteristics typified Dave. The list could go on with his qualities and accomplishments in caving and cave management. He also made contributions to his community through the Shasta County Search and Rescue. Since he was skilled in rope work, he helped about eight members of the SAR get their vertical training certification last year. During his 13 years in the Sheriff's rescue posse Dave helped on countless rescues in Samwel and Potter Creek caves alone! Dave was into cave rescue in a big way, and gave many training sessions above and below ground.

We are going to miss him very much over the months and years to come. He taught by example; how to be there when needed, give of yourself generously, to love the caves you visit and leave no trace. He did leave something of himself in each of us tho', and that's what a friend is!

May God rest his soul! See you later, Dave!

JW



SHASTA AREA GROTTO MEETING

Jan 1998

Shasta Area Grotto met on January 9, 1998, from 7:51 to 8:38 PM at Melanie Jackson's (new) home in Yreka. Present were Jim & Liz Wolff, Ray Miller, Bill & Cheryl Kenney, Bill Fitzpatrick, Lee Simons, Bill Broeckel, Juan de la Fuente, Kyle Haines, and Melanie.

Minutes accepted as read. Treasurer's report: \$469.50.

Correspondence: a new issue of American Caving Accidents was passed around. Ray Miller sent a letter to the McCloud District Ranger regarding Bat Cave. The letter asks for final documentation on the cave, a management plan, and for posting the cave as closed, with the reason for the closure.

Old Business: Some bat misinformation was noted in "Noah's News," a publication for school children, and distributed at the Audubon Society Yreka meeting about bats. It was suggested to contact Audubon about the misconceptions. Regarding Bat Cave, the management plan needs to be written this winter. A light sensor has been installed. Regarding Shasta Valley caves (Pluto, Barnum, and Sand), wildlife biologist Sam Cuenca is consulting on the management plan, with Ray Miller reviewing the first draft copy. Regarding the cave register program, four caves in Northern California have had registers replaced.

New Business: Sag Rag gets a new flag! Broeckel suggests offering SOG a page or two in the Sag Rag. A new Western Region brochure tells about the NSS, the Region, caving, and internet reference. 30 SAG ballots were mailed out, with 24 returned. All the same officers were re-elected. Chairman – Jim Wolff, Vice-Chair – Bill Broeckel, Secretary – Melanie Jackson, & Treasurer – Liz Wolff. Thanks to everyone's rapid response. Bill Kenney announces an Oregon Caves work project in North Canyon Jan. 17-19, sponsored by the Cascade Grotto. "Cave keeper" Ken Showalter expressed interest in seeing the nominated caves of the McCloud District.

Meetings were set at Wolff's in McCloud on Feb. 13, with Bill Fitzpatrick to show the second half of selected LaForge stereo cave slides. The Mar. 13 meeting is to be held at Kenney's in Klamath Falls, with a follow-up limestone cave trip.

Trip reports: Fitzpatrick caved in Colorado, and showed slides in the cave. Christmas Tree Cave resurvey is in progress.

After much hesitation, the meeting was adjourned, and Fitzpatrick showed the first half of the stereo slides. AWESOME! Don't miss the 2nd half. **MJ**

SHASTA AREA GROTTO MEETING

Feb 1998

The meeting was held on February 13, 1998, from 7:50 to 9:05 PM at Wolff's home in McCloud. Present were Ray Miller, Melanie Jackson, Jim Kottinger, Linda Villatore & Mark Fritzke, Dan Downs, Niels Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Bill Fitzpatrick, and guests Chuck Frank III and Chuck Frank IV.

The minutes were accepted as read. Treasurer's report: \$443.56.

Correspondence: The Oregon Caves National Monument Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement has been printed and the grotto has a copy. Jim Wolff read an e-mail from Steve Knutson urging us to support alternative C. Comments may be sent by e-mail and are due by March 13, 1998. The Oregon Caves Underworld paper has a summary of the draft plan and a mailer that can be submitted to Craig Ackerman. Each will count as a vote. A copy of this publication was given to each person present to facilitate a good response.

Old Business: Ray Miller spoke with Audubon regarding the bat misinformation in Noah's News. The person was not familiar with the publication and suggested dropping the concern. Ray did drop it at this time. Miller also has replied to Sam Cuenca regarding the first draft of Pluto Caves management. Some corrections and suggestions were offered. The grotto will receive a copy of the preliminary when it is ready.

New Business: Ray Miller attended a bat workshop in Reno. It covered bats from the West Coast to the Dakotas, and to the Mexican border. Range, abundance, and problems particular to each species were discussed, with an eye toward planning future research. As a result, Ray will make some changes on the research protocols with the 17 species in our area. The next SAG meetings were set at Kenney's in Klamath Falls on March 13 with a trip to No Name Cave planned. Apr. 4 – coastal meeting at Fritzke's.

Trip Reports: Liz Wolff took Dunsmuir Jr. High students to Barnum Cave. The breathing of the cave was discussed and a lot of brush was removed. Ray Miller did a bat show for the same group. The North Canyon work at Oregon Caves Jan. 17-19 was foiled by a freshly poured concrete trail and heavy weather that complicated travel plans. Mark Fritzke went caving in Hawaii and did a through trip of Kazamura Cave and helped survey a new cave system on the east side of the 1881 lava flow (3 miles so far). After the meeting, Fritzke showed slides of Lechuguilla, Borneo, & Hawaii. **MJ**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR By Jim Wolff

Greetings from your "new" Chairman!

It has been awhile that I've written anything for the newsletter. So, I'll choose the subject of: INVOLVEMENT !!

"Involvement"? Does that mean we're going to be getting our hands to respond to a DRAFT cave-management plan and environmental impact statement for the Oregon Caves Natl. Monument? I'd like to see individuals respond, rather than a generic letter or just one from the grotto.

Now, I don't want to be alone on this, so you could help me out by sending off a brief letter or card to the Supervisor of the Monument. And it won't be hard at all, all you could ask them to send you a copy of the report, and/or address the following items that I feel important to the chosen (Preferred) alternative:

The Preferred Alternative C

1. By getting a great big buffer of land around the park and rope in all the known limestone outcrops into the park boundaries, the subsurface drainage that may drain into the karst from a totally different approach, than what the terrain on the surface may indicate, could affect the cave's ecology, the food chain included. Other alternatives have fewer acres reserved for the park.
2. Getting away from the concessionaire's (good intentions) cave guide service, to Park Service – guided tours. The need for change was evident because of all the unofficial trips by guides into the cave. Also the tour quality was poor, and the number of people a day on the tours was pretty high. So, the carrying capacity of the cave had to be set to limit the tours to fewer trips into the cave, and fewer people per tour. There was a need to space the time of darkness in the cave to longer intervals. The three month closure of the cave in the winter to guided tours for the sake of hibernation bats is another improvement in Alt C. Considering the concessionaire ran pretty much everything there in the past, loosing the control over the tours and the Park regaining the most control over the interpretation of the natural history of the Cave and Park was a plus. And with Alt C the cave will see less impact from the tours.
3. Besides the above, Alt C has some better use put to the buildings, and a fire management plan that should work.

There were at least three points that I caught that were obvious; some typos and omissions on pp 61 and 62.

A brief mention that the subsurface hydrology was poorly understood and that further study might help understand where most of the water of the cave comes from. The plans for that study should be addressed further, but isn't. Further dye tracing should solve that question.

Lastly, the Park is planning on letting the Illinois Valley Visitor Center (IVVC), in Cave Junction, to give the initial contact to the public – where the majority of interpretation of the Park's natural history will be given. The Park should not allow the IVVC to tell the public about "... the USFS Marble Mountains Wilderness Area ... which has a cave system that sits in a geologic setting similar to Oregon Caves", like it was suggested in the alternative.

All in all, they are on the right track, Just that YOU need to get involved with YOUR cave. After all, it is OUR cave, eh? They are counting on our input, after all, who else will do it?

Write to: Superintendent, Oregon Caves National Monument
19000 Caves Highway, Cave Junction, OR 97523

MANY THANKS, FRIENDS!

Jim

COMMENTS NEEDED AT OREGON CAVES

By Steve Knutson

Dear Cavers,

The Oregon Caves Draft Management Plan is now out for comment. We need to support the alternative (C) which calls for the following changes in the Monument:

1. The Maximum expansion to the north to include all possible karst watersheds and important viewsheds. I'd say that at least half the flow of the River Styx is not accounted for by drainage in the cave or sinking streams above – yet the volume is such that it must be draining parts of the mountain outside the Monument.
2. Taking over at least part of buildings from the concession so that there can be an interpretive center at the cave.
3. Taking over the tours from the concession – in the past the concession hired and trained the tour guides and ran the tours, taking all the profits. Profits aside, the quality of the current tours is very poor. NPS run tours would certainly be better.

Please Email your support for these changes (if you think it right) by March 12, 1998, to:

roger_brandt@nps.gov (use lower case)

The same address can be used to get a copy of the Draft Management Plan, or call 541-592-2100.

Thanks, Steve Knutson

From ROGUE WALKER Feb. 98

From OREGON CAVES UNDERWORLD Dec. 97

Write Today!

March 13 is Deadline for Public Comment

Write a postcard or letter 1) congratulating the National Park Service on its decision to expand Oregon Caves National Monument; 2) that Alternative C gets your approval; 3) that the southern boundary needs to include the logging road for fire protection of the Monument. Remind them that it's not just watershed protection, but fire protection as well.

Send to:

Superintendent Craig Ackerman
Oregon Caves National Monument
19000 Caves Highway
Cave Junction, OR 97523

Four alternatives have been examined in this Draft Oregon Caves National Monument General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS). They respond to both NPS planning requirements and to the issues identified during the scoping process. The alternatives are characterized as follows: 1) Alternative A is the "No Action Alternative" which means a continuation of the present course of action, or maintenance of the status quo of existing policies and programs; 2) Alternative B is the "Minimum Requirements Alternative" and describes those minimum actions, consistent with the purpose of the park, that are required for the safe and effective operation of the park; 3) Alternative C is the proposed action and "Preferred Alternative;" it emphasizes enhanced protection of the Monument resources and visitor experiences; and 4) Alternative D emphasizes increased visitor services and recreational opportunities combined with increased watershed protection.

NEWSLETTER REVIEW 2/21/98 By Dick LaForge

I am writing this at Jim and Liz Wolff's home. We came over from the coast to go skiing. Yesterday we did, and last night it dropped two to three feet of snow. Not going anywhere, we spent the morning shoveling out and the afternoon trying to ski to town. I didn't know a newsletter was coming out. It has been so long since I have written a newsletter review that I have forgotten the deadlines, if there are any, and Bighorn has given up on reminding me. Anyway, it is a quiet snowy evening in McCloud and I have six months' of caving newsletters with me.

Before going further, let me explain the absence of Reviews, in case anyone has missed them. Chairmanship of LEARN has taken more than all of my spare "cave" time. There are over 500 LEARN e-mail messages in my file for last year. But it is going OK, LEARN is doing OK. Also last year I changed jobs. Time-consuming efforts to get #2 son into music school have been distracting. I have not been caving much, didn't even go to the Marbles last year, nor to LECH.

I was just too busy, but some of the business is from new interests. Kathy and I spend time on long bicycle rides. Beekeeping and writing about it for the local Bee Club (of all things). A new obsession, euphonium playing, hit last winter (A euphonium is a small tuba, and it sounds just terrific, sort of like a French Horn on steroids). I have decided that music is a good old age activity, so am, presumably, getting ready.

Am I the aging caver in decline? Time will tell. I have no physical problems, so it would be mental. I have recently thought of a column for the NEWS about "The Aging Caver", since so many of us are. There are more and less graceful ways to wind down. The mental and physical journeys of aging cavers must be interesting and have useful lessons to those of us who are doing it. Maybe this is the first essay in the series. But I am not dropping out. It's just that life is asking me to do other things recently.

Enough about me. Now for the newsletters. There is some writing of exceptional quality, and I wish we could reprint all of that, but there isn't room. First, a pair of caution/disaster stories. SFBC, September 1997, has a story named "The Cold Hard Facts of Freezing to Death," by Peter Stark for Outside Magazine. Written as a story, it tells of a couple who get stuck in the snow and hike out in sub-zero temperatures. As they slowly freeze to death (or almost), their symptoms and physiological decline is explained. Then, in The Valley Caver, Spring 1997, there is "Jack and Jill's Not So Excellent Adventure, or The Biological Effects of Increased Carbon Dioxide on the Human Body." (Bad Air) A hypothetical story told in similar style, both these articles are very well written and describe in detail problems that cavers should beware of. They are each quite long. I strongly encourage you to look them up next time you visit Jim and Liz.

This leads quite naturally to "Moaning Caverns, a long-winded tale of Bad Air", by Glenn Butcher in the SFBC Chapter newsletter of November 1997. This report of a recent off-the-tourist-trail trip is four pages and is very well written and entertaining. This is real literature! Bighorn just showed up so I can ask him if he can print this. If not, borrow it and read it.

The trouble is, there is quite a bit of interesting stuff. There is a "CRF Lava Beds NM Thanksgiving 1997 Trip Report", by Robert Mudry, in the SFBC for January 1998. "Pre-Convention TAG Cave Trips" by Mike Outlaw in The Devil's Advocate, Feb. 1998. You need to know this if you are going to the convention this year.

I do want to print "Labor Day Weekend at the Rocky Mountain Regional", by Bern Szukaiki, from The Explorer, December 1997. We go to our Regionals. What are theirs like? Fun and adventure, and this account is well written.

I also think you should read "The Wakulla II Exploration Project", printed in The Explorer, January 1998, but originally from <http://wakulla2.com/index.htm>. As you know, Wakulla is a spring/underground cave system in Florida. I just want you to read the technical details of the expedition proposed for 1998. This is the highest tech caving there is. Read it and be amazed. Just the short paragraph describing the automated inertial guidance compass sonar sketching computer system will make you feel you are in the Stone Age (you do hang out in caves, right?) Stay in touch this year at their web site! **DL**



The time has come to renew our yearly SAG membership dues and newsletter subscriptions. The prices still remain the same as before!

NAME: _____ NSS# _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ SAG dues (includes RAG) \$6 per person or family.
Membership category (person or family) _____

_____ I want to subscribe to CAL CAUER too. Thats another \$6.

_____ SAG RAG subscription only, without SAG membership. \$6.

_____ TOTAL. Make checks payable to Shasta Area Grotto, and send to Liz Wolff, POB 865, McCloud, CA 96057.

SAG RAG
524 Annie Street
Yreka CA 96097

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Remove Staple For Inspection