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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

- December 7-31 Guadalupe.
Claude needs someone to go caving with while visiting in-laws in Carlsbad, N.M. Guaranteed super cave trips. Have to provide own transportation to and from Carlsbad.
- December 9 Grotto meeting.
At Jim and Liz Wolff's, 6 Mill Rd, McCloud 964-3123.
- January 13 Grotto meeting.
At Claude and Mary Belle Smith's, 131 Oleander Circle, Redding 246-3942.

GROTTO ELECTIONS

Ballots will be mailed out in December. If you want to nominate someone for office, let Claude know before the end of November. Only NSS members are allowed to vote and hold office. The following have been nominated so far:

- Chairperson – Liz Wolff, Joe Molter, Roger Jones.
- Vice-chairman – Don Quinton, Dick LaForge, Mark Fritzke, Claude Smith
- Secretary – Mary Belle Smith, Jim Wolff
- Treasurer – Norm Jenkins, Neils Smith, Glen Everest, Arley Kisling

It was decided at the November meeting that no one can decline to run for office (unless they are not an NSS member).

RED TAPE CAVE DISCOVERED by Jim Wolff

On August 22nd while determining the extent of an archaeological site for the Forest Service, I ran across a new lava cave, now called Red Tape because of the "red tape" I will have to go through to protect it! It lies within the Harris Lodgepole Timber Sale and will be only a year or less (!) before logging commences above it.

The cave has over 200 feet of walking passage and is moderately complex, both vertically and horizontally. Though not mapped or studied yet, the cave can be protected by a letter from the grotto, identifying the cave resource, promising "immediate action" in the form of field work and recommendations to the Forest Service.

Two leads remain in the cave, one upper level and a lower level passage. The entrance sink area has a light obsidian scatter and may be included into the neighboring archaeological site. More on this one later

LETTER FROM DICK LAForge

As you may know I am East this summer, and have been so busy as not to have time for much writing. In fact I just got and opened the Rag of June 83 to find I owe dues. I'm sorry I have not had time to write of the cave convention at Elkins and other adventures. For now, these few notes will have to do.

The convention was a bit hindered by having its activities in town at Davis and Elkins College, and camping about 10 miles away, unavoidably. Otherwise, it went well, though I was too busy with my own interests and responsibilities to get a good overall view. The 30-person portable hot tub was there, and a large, wood-fired, co-ed shower complex also made by Peter. The photo salon judging seemed as arbitrary as ever (slides). There were lots of caves locally for visiting.

After the convention, I went up to Pittsburg for the wedding of So. Cal. cavers Dave Bunnell and Carol Veseley. At the reception the relatives were seated at one side and the large number of cavers on the other, and at the end of the room. The cavers out-parked the relatives, a good time was had by all. The next day we headed back south for two weeks of caving and touring in W. Virginia and Tennessee, including especially caving in the Friars Hole system, which is 40+ miles now. Son Seth was with me through all this – not every cave trip though.

Since returning to Connecticut, I have been working on a housebuilding project for sister and brother-in-law (the reason I came), very full time. Now will stay here into October to get the house substantially completed and also to see fall colors, then will drive back thru the Black Hills and Yellowstone. Seth will fly back next week for school, but Evan (4) will ride back with me. No more caving this summer, probably.

So I'll miss the Western Regional – good luck – and also the Marbles this year, unless they are open late. The summer has been very full already. I have some good new 3-D's of these Eastern caves, with their long passages that we don't have much of out West. By the way, I showed 3-D's by myself and about 5 others at the convention for a whole afternoon – they were well received.

1983 WESTERN REGIONAL MEETING, SEPT. 3, 4, 5th by Jim Wolff

All in all, it was considered a huge success!! Of course, the success of this event hinged entirely on the cooperation and the energies of each individual who helped us out. I want to thank every one of you.

Claude, for the initial faith in the grotto to host this event, and for putting out many dollars of your own to reserve the campground! The beer and soda pop idea was his, and resulted in many dollars for the regional funds. Claude also set up the Shasta Caverns Tour, which turned out to be a huge success – much more than anyone bargained for!! Our hard hats are off for the Andersons at the Caverns for allowing us free-reign of the cave and their most understanding guides. We may even have a potential new grotto member, from the guide staff. And Claude, thanks for all of your extra efforts in helping registration, phone calls for me, cave trips, banquet, camp maintenance and Forest Service liaison. All this and much more!

Thanks Liz, for your help in registration and pre-registration! We had 98 people pre-registered, which was 78% of those who attended. And final count was 126 people there! The maps Liz made

of the Shasta Lake and McCloud caving areas offered a good overview for everyone, to show where we go caving a lot. Your help in the banquet was also very much appreciated.

And Joe, we appreciated very much your efforts in helping keep the registration money records straight and for sending off the pre-registered names to Doug Bradford who took care of those fine regional buttons for us. And as the regional cave trip coordinator, you did a marvelous job! The guided trips proved to be the best idea, both for the cavers and the caves' sake. There was even an impromptu plane flight over the McCloud Formation to spot cave entrances. Our members, Arley Kisling and Roger Jones spotted some promising openings, and later, on Sunday, Roger checked out one ..., but that's another story. Joe, thanks again for your large effort to make this a great event! A good time was had by all.

Mary Belle, your time and efforts for this most successful banquet were highly appreciated!! Nothing but compliments were heard about the food served. Plenty of food was offered, and everyone ate their fill. The extra food left over was auctioned off that evening before the fine slide shows. Mrs. Smith, your help in registration was also greatly appreciated.

Arley, thanks goes to you for your support by being available, to help where it was needed. And for "spelling" the people at registration desk for a good number of hours.

Roger too gets our pat on the back for a job well done, by sacrificing his time to lead cave trips and to fly over the limestone, spotting holes for us!! We need more folks like him. Keep up the good work, Roger.

Hey, Nancy! Thanks for showing up and giving us your moral (morale?) support, and being our newest grot to member, we appreciate you very much!

Also my thanks go out to John Blum for setting up the Speleolympics and Vern Smith for doing the Vertical Contest. Both activities helped make this regional one to remember. Also the tip of the hard hat goes to our Western Region chairman, John DeBoer for the fine job of auctioneering some of the strangest items! And for Dave Cowan for bringing up his huge slide screen. Without the screen we couldn't have had the fine showing we did!

In the beginning, I commented that this regional shindig would either make or break the grotto. I feel now that it has strengthened the grotto. After all, we still talk to each other, and none of us have dropped out of caving since then so, ... Really though, what this whole thing has shown me was that no matter how small of a membership we have, and no matter what our resources are, we joined together for a common cause, pooled our talents, and accomplished a whole lot!!! Thanks, Gang.

And to all of those who wanted to come, but couldn't, your spirit and support was felt very much too. You missed a good one. Hope to see you soon.

KMCTF Speleocamp, Marble Mtns. by Jim Wolff
or
How the SAG meeting was called off due to caving.

The traditional Speleocamp this year was held September 5th thru 11th. Claude Smith, my family and I were only able to be there the last half of the week, from Thursday through Sunday.

During the early week, Crystal Drains Cave was pushed to its limit, by trying the “last and final” remaining lead. The passage was mapped at least 100 ft. and said to go another 50 ft. before getting much too small. Drystream Cave saw some work and so did Bigfoot Cave. Other work like pit checking was done, but it appeared to be a fairly low key week, as some cavers went fishing and/or hiking, for the fun of it!

When the Wolffs finally arrived around noon Thursday, the camp was just then deciding what to do for the day! Dave Cowan and a small crew headed, off towards Wooley Creek Karst, to dig in a blowing pit with plenty of potential. We were tired and thought of doing nothing but loafing around camp for the day, but after a few hours, Mark Fritzsche and a fellow by the name of Ken (I didn't catch his last name), talked me into going up to the back side of Little Black Mountain where Bear Cave was supposed to be. The cave was visited only once by Steve Knutson, and was supposed to have some going stuff, so I decided to tag along.

Mark took us across the karst and showed us the location of both Meatgrinder entrances and where Kneejam Pit was. From there, maybe 500 feet elevation or so, to the top of the karst, there haven't been any caves found over the years. And everyone would just love to find a higher entrance to Bigfoot. When we finally reached the top of the valley, what a sight to behold! Looking into Rainy Valley one sees the sheer marble cliff walls that make up the head of the valley – and that was where our objective was, somewhere below our feet, anywhere from 400 to 800 feet straight below us!

Since we didn't really have the exact directions on how to find Bear Cave, we went for the most obvious cave-like opening we could see, as viewed from the rocky point we were on. Mark and Ken finally found a route all the way down, and I only half the way. I had got to a point where I could not go down any further without risk of falling. Besides; trying the same rocky chute that my friends had used, I used what I thought to be a more stable rock face, only to find handholds and footholds to be portable! So I decided to return to the top, using a different route this time. On the way up I spotted a small patch of brush to my right, so I used the stuff to pull myself across this ravine towards a stand of trees. Upon reaching the other side of the brush I found a 3 foot diameter hole on the side of this dirt covered portion of a rocky ridge. The entrance looked climbable, to a point just a few feet inside, to where a pit opened up below in a 20 foot diameter room. [Jim's cave, described in the paragraphs that follow, is Hot Shit Pit – pdf ed.]

All I took with me at first was my flashlight, which throws a fairly good beam. As I was climbing in, I kicked loose a rock, sending it to the depths below. The rock landed on a ledge, probably some thirty feet below, and didn't go further, so I proceeded a little further on to where my whole body was now positioned over the drop. Since there wasn't a shortage of loose rocks, I chose a large one and pitched it in. My body now blocked all available light, and since my flashlight couldn't penetrate one spot down there, I wonder ...? So by dropping the rock there gave way to series of echoes that lasted for a real long time! It was at least five seconds or longer before I couldn't hear the rock any longer.

I returned to my cave pack for more light, hoping that the combined lights would illuminate a route to the ledge. Upon returning, I found that no way was I to climb down that! So, returning to the surface again, I figured I needed a “witness” to check this one out and hollered for Mark and Ken, who I thought to be still below me. As it turned out, they discovered that cave-like opening was twenty feet above the base of the cliff, and ten of it was overhung and unclimbable. So they had traversed halfway across towards Marble Gap, when they turned to see me yelling and waving my arm. I thought that they just pooh-poohed my antics as a come-on, or a joke to get them to come on all the way over. After all, who would look for a cave here? So, I packed up and went over into Marble Valley towards camp. About the time I was about level with Kneejam Pit, I heard shouts above. It was Mark and Ken. As it turned out, they were impressed by my display of lit carbide, limp and frantic gestures, so they hustled up the karst to me from Marble Gap. So, I turned to show my find to my eager friends. It was getting dark.

We all had to throw our “allotment” of rocks down the pit, much to our delight. We would all try and contain ourselves while each rock made its way to the bottom, but inevitably someone would giggle or chuckle much too prematurely, and miss the last of the faintest of echoes. Then someone would get scolded and another rock would have to get tossed, this time with pain of death for those who made a sound. After this went on for a while, we soon realized that we had better get on back to camp. We left my rope all coiled up, hanging on a branch of a snag nearby. Now we were sure to come back tomorrow, no matter what.

During that eve, Claude had arrived at camp, so we had at least one more hardy soul to tackle the cave. But, as the evening progressed around the campfire, more and more cavers were interested in “the find of the day”. Everyone went to bed pretty early because of the bitter cold temperatures. I wished I had brought my down parka!

Friday dawned nice and clear, and cold! Not everyone was up with the birds you know, it was a matter of waiting out the sunshine, or your bladder, whichever came first. Well, I finally had to abandon my warm sleeping bag to answer the call of nature, with instructions from inside the tent to start the coffee water to boiling, while I was at it! Sigh. So started my day. However, the early birds of the camp were Dave Cowan and Paul Greaves and they had the coffee water boiling, and the sunshine. Pretty soon everyone was ready to go caving, and before noon even! Once everyone was assembled at the cave someone had to decide who was to be the first to go down. Mark was volunteered, Dave Cowan, Scott Linn and myself made up the crew.

The cave starts out as a 30 foot or so drop to a short ledge, then on over to another 30 foot pit. The second drop brings you to a steep, rocky slope that tends to avalanche on you, and right above a third pit! And good ol’ number three is a toughie. One has to enter it on rappel, feet first on your belly, hands above your head. The ceiling height above the drop is about eighteen inches, at best, and the diameter of the entry is 3’ x 2’. It is kinda kidney shaped and has a nubbin of rock that pokes at your diaphragm and snags all your clothes and equipment, making the descent interesting, to say the least! Beyond that point, I can only recount bits and pieces of what happened.

Since Mark had gone ahead and rigged the entrance drops and the third pit, Scott Linn, Dave Cowan and myself did the mapping, at least down to the beginning of the third drop. Scott, having been up at Speleocamp since the beginning of the week and just did a 165 foot blind pit above Kneejam Pit, was much too pooped and cold to continue. This left the team with three. After Dave straightened out my notes, he squeezed over the lip of the pit and rappelled on down to join Mark. Mark, who had gone to sleep above a 40 foot climbable drop, informed us that the fifth and final

drop was too tight (he estimated it to be seven inches wide), but the rocks he let go went another 30 feet or more, and it was still blowing air. So much for connecting to Bigfoot Cave.

On Friday, plans were made for a trip in the Chthulu River area in Bigfoot. Mark had some stuff in there to map and he had some folk who hadn't been in the cave before, so why not? Dave and I thought we would go to Little Marble Valley and do some pit checking. In the process of scouting the karst, I had a guided tour of many cave entrances, many of which were less than a hundred feet apart, but the passages do not connect. Caves such as Slipstream, Toothpaste Tube, Echoplex, Breakdown Palace and Planetary Dairy Cave. Dave also showed me a cave he had found near Slipstream that had a 40 foot entrance drop. Jetstream Cave is well named as it has a terrific blast of air coming out of its three and a half foot diameter entrance. At the bottom is a 15x25 foot room, with one wall that has small, quarter-sized scallops all over it. All of the air comes out of a wide bedding plane crawl that comes from underneath that scalloped wall. It looked like it would take just about five rocks to be removed to continue. Since I was alone, I didn't push the passage. Looked like the passage continued as hands and knees towards the dark unknown. ...

Dave and I found along the marble and schist contact a cave that was roofed over in a couple of places with breakdown, and had a huge snow plug hanging over a series of downclimbs, in and out of a pair of domes that lead to what appeared a fault zone (?), anyway, slick inside. A couple of leads remain in this new and very promising cave. We got back to camp before dark as I was expecting to have the SAG meeting that evening, and since we had five members up there that weekend Well, to make a long story short (about time, eh?), Claude, Mark et al, never showed up. Guess they were too busy caving, or something. Well, postpone the meeting for another day – maybe.

There was a big trip up to the Black Mountain area to Upstairs Downstairs Cave and then there was Roger in his demented pursuits of the snow-bound pseudokarst of Supersink. And then the downhill skiing on two foot long cross country skis?! It has been a long week for somebody!!

PLUTO CAVE MAPPED

During this year's Regional, a number of people went with Peter Bosted of the SFBC and mapped Pluto Cave, located just off highway 97, NE of Weed. Apparently the cave is several thousand feet long and has huge dimensions.

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