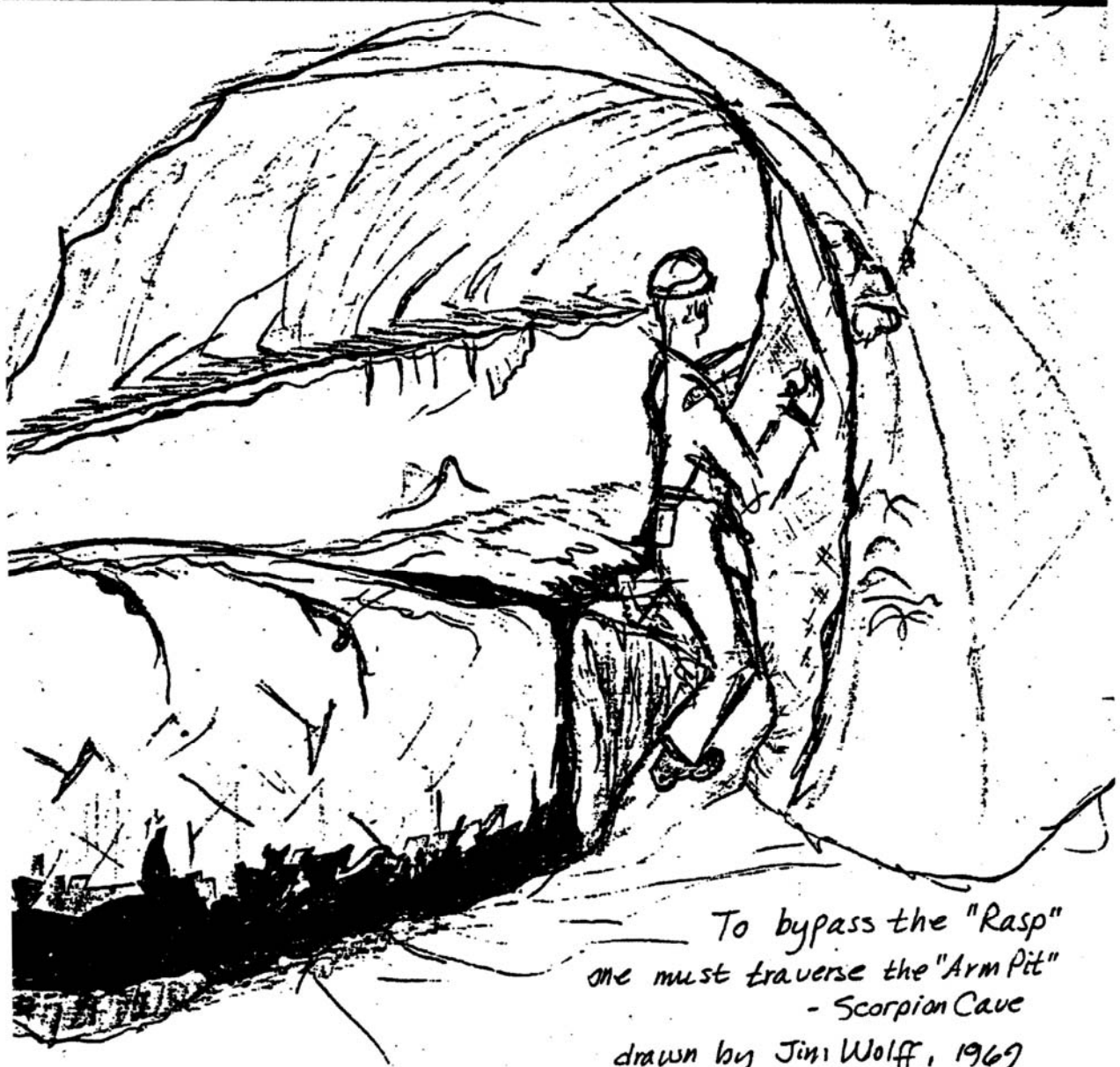


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THE SAG RAG

SHASTA AREA GROTTO NEWSLETTER



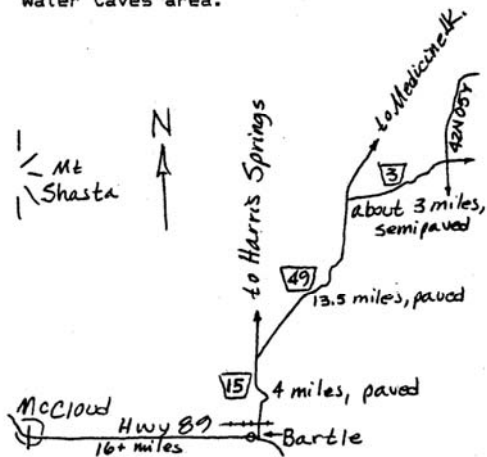
To bypass the "Rasp"
one must traverse the "Arm Pit"
- Scorpion Cave

drawn by Jimi Wolff, 1969

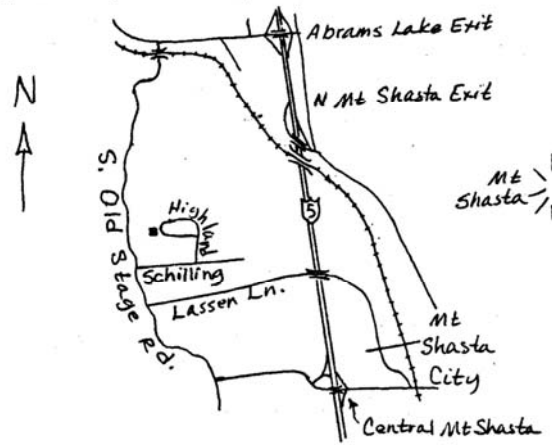
The SAG RAG is published bi-monthly by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editors: Jim and Liz Wolff, PO Box 865, McCloud, Ca. 96057. Printing: Ray Miller. Grotto meetings are held the second Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. Meeting places are announced in the newsletter. Membership 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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September 14 SAG meeting: campout in the Water Caves area.



October 12 SAG meeting: Jim Kottingers', 1922 Highland Dr, Mt Shasta, 926-3975.



August 24-25 Jefferson State Grotto, mapping project in the Freudian Complex.

September 1-9 Speleocamp in the Marble Mtns.

Late September or October – Oregon Caves restoration, let us know if you're interested.

MEETING MINUTES

July 1990 SAG meeting held June 29 at Wolffs. Present: Steve Knutson, J & L Wolff, W Smith, J & B Kottinger, N Smith, R Miller, G & D Reel. Chair Neils called the meeting to order at 7:47 pm, minutes accepted as read. Treasurers report: \$333.54.

Old Business: The RAG needs contributors.

Correspondence: News release from Church Cave Conservation committee inviting all grottos to help with a gating project. Letter from SFBC inviting one and all to the convention in Yreka. Letter to the Jefferson State Grotto on the rope climb.

New Business: Trip leaders are needed yet during the convention. George will be camped at Samwel Cave Monday & Tuesday to lead trips. Those going on the rope climb with the Jefferson State Grotto meet at Wolffs at 9 am. The Samwel cave clean up should be finished. Arrangements for the key have been finalized.

August 1990 SAG meeting held near Scorpion Cave. Present: J & L Wolff, J Swofford, G Reel, J Kottinger, Bill McGahey, Cindy Wright, Mary Faustini. Vice chair Jim Kottinger called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm, minutes accepted as read. Treasurers report: \$331.51.

Old Business: Jim W replaced the 3 Level Cave register and made a copy for the USFS. USFS resource officer Jim Russum says that no formal process is required to install registers in other caves. Ray would like to see one put in Roadside Cave.

New Business: Meeting locations: September meet at the Water Caves lava flow campsite beside Timber Hill. October meeting at Kottingers'. Late September or early October schedule trip to Oregon Caves to help with the restoration. Jay says we may stay in the guide quarter after the guides are laid off. Dixie will be here Aug 20-21 to count bats. Speleocamp over Labor Day weekend.

. . . With our greatest sympathy and prayers, we are thinking of you Neils during the recent passing of your brother, Steve Smith. He was always happy and kind. A quiet person, who would give you anything. Liz and I first met him at the Subway Cave camp-out a year ago.

TRIP REPORT FOR SAMWEL AND SHASTA CAVERNS

by George Reel

During the NSS convention during the week of July 9-13, Dorothy and I had the pleasure of leading trips into Samwel Cave Monday and Tuesday. We took our 5th wheel to Samwel and stayed there for two days. Monday night two of the cavers parked their camper and stayed the night. They left early the next day to do some ridge walking. They seemed to enjoy even the temperatures over a hundred. We all enjoyed some good cave talk that night as we cooled down with ice tea. Tuesday we left Samwel at 3:30 to make it to Shasta Caverns for the trip there. By that time Tuesday afternoon there had been 16 people in Samwel. Most had done the pit. All came away very impressed with the cave.

The real Adventure came as we toured Shasta Caverns. They went all out to make sure that we had a good time and had all kinds of surprises for us. I could hardly believe the trouble they went to see that we would remember that trip.

First, they tried to launch into service their new all-purpose floating bus. I think the idea is to have people board on the main shore and not have to unload again till they reach the cave entrance. This was a little premature. The floats were not attached, the bus was not water proofed and took on water. Anyone who might have been on board would have gotten wet as well all of their equipment. The drive gear was not correct. The needed something more than just the wheels to drive the bus in the water. I do believe they realized some of their mistakes when the bus disappeared under the water. But they were only trying to make our trip interesting.

As we arrived on the far shore they had a B-B-Q waiting for us – Good food. Everyone seemed to enjoy eating. Seconds were in order. The trip into the cave was fantastic. We had no guides, and were able to go anywhere we wanted. No matter where you looked you could see feet or a head sticking out of a hole. Found old ladders that were still in place used by early cavers to gain entrance. Used these to find the old entrance. Cable ladders that led down 50 feet to new levels not open to the public. This trip was a caver's delight.

Afterwards they allowed us to walk down from the cave to the boat landing. A distance of about 2 1/2 miles. The road is posted that there is to be no foot traffic on the road. To make it seem more real they parked a bus in the middle of the road so no traffic could get around to bring us down from the cave. They told us that it had broken down. Some people were lucky enough to be able to walk both ways. Up to the cave and back down again. Then at the bottom of the road the management met us with nice cold water to quench our thirst. I did make a suggestion to them that since this worked so well, and if they planned to make this a part of their regular trips, that they make sure everyone had a light. It did get dark on the road.

As we waited for the boat to take us back to the main shore, we were again entertained with the pulling of the bus out of the water. They even brought a wrecker over from the main shore on a barge to make everything look real. They even had two sheriffs' boats at the scene. They must have practiced for hours to have everything wrong go so smoothly. The finishing touch was on the boat trip back. I was sitting behind the skipper and was able to see what others didn't. I do believe he needs to practice more because others were not aware of what he was doing. He pretended that he was having trouble with the engines. Red lights were flashing on his panel and a little smoke came up. He kept the engines from running as they should. It did take us some time to make the return trip and you could hear what sounded like trouble. I and one other person were aware of the skipper's efforts to give the impression of trouble. As I said he needs more practice so people could see.

We arrived back at the parking lot at 12 midnight. Dorothy and I stayed in the parking lot in our fifth wheel till the next day to start the trip home. We enjoyed the trip into Shasta Caverns and are looking forward to going back. What will they think up next to entertain us? I don't think that they will be able to top this.

Cautious Caver Sez: Never hike with an artist, you may end up on the short end of the stick.

What's a "Trip Leader" like anyway...!? by J. Wolff

You may have read other articles about this subject before, and this won't be anything new, really, but it can't help but be repeated again and again...

Being a trip leader is a hard job which has a lot of responsibility with it. You must realize that a trip leader has an entire party of cavers as their ultimate responsibility, and that's more than enough for most cavers! It is assumed that you know the most about the cave you are about to explore. Plus, you're supposed to be able to handle almost all situations that should arise. The job is sounding more difficult now, here are some reasons why.

Some characteristics of a good trip leader are:

- He is patient; giving all of his spare energy to his people.
- He is communicative; not just "talkative".
- He is knowledgeable of the cave, caving techniques and equipment. He knows what the abilities and physical limitations of his companions are. He is watching each caver's moves; for signs of hypothermia, fatigue, etc. that can contribute to lack of coordination and judgment, which in turn can precipitate a caving accident! This is especially important when the cave involves any climbing and/or ropework. Please, don't allow any sharing of vertical gear, as you may be asking for problems right from the start!

Communication is very important to the success or failure of a cave trip. It is the best way to get around most problems. Be willing to listen to suggestions if your group runs into trouble. You may want to utilize the caving experience and skills of your entire party – so be flexible and listen to any suggestion! This applies to each caver on the trip.

Balance your party; experienced cavers with the less experienced. Keep your people together and adopt the "**buddy system**" while in the cave or outside it. The system assures no one is left with more than a few minutes to themselves. Try and keep within voice contact at the very least. Generally speaking, knowing the location of your buddy, and his situation, is enough contact to be of immediate assistance if needed. This is very important. (Read about the Thanksgiving Cave fatality, American Caving Accidents, 1987.)

Adjust your pace to the slowest, less-experienced cavers in your group, and always give a belay if it is asked for. It should not be assumed that everyone will ask for help, so make it be known from the start that you would appreciate this information.

YOU are responsible for everyone (including yourself!). Think of the rescue cavers having to get you out of a bad situation! Address the "worst-case-scenario" and, if necessary, give in to "Plan B"; don't be too proud to back off from your primary objective and re-assess the situation. Changing plans during a trip is a common thing. It is a good idea to leave a note in a conspicuous place on your proposed route in case rescuers need to know your change of plans.

REPORTS FROM SAG MEMBERS and FRIENDS

- Roger Jones took several cavers out to the **Kangaroo Mtn. Karst** during the 1990 NSS Convention. Several caves are in this karst area in the Red Buttes Wilderness. This trip seemed to renew interest in the area and several people want to return ... A good campout possibility for the grotto this year??

- Jim Wolff replaced the register in **Three Level Ice Cave**. The convention supplied us with the majority of signatures. Installed in Sept. 89, the new register took nine months to fill. A fresh register was placed on the 29th of July and is the third one the cave has seen... Copies are to be sent to the Social Science Section of the NSS.

- Caving in the Marbles during July: Several new cave discoveries, including **Stash Cave** which is around 700 ft. long and still going.

- A **new cave** was found near Giant Crater, during the convention. Richard Leet, the discoverer, wants to come back this fall and map it. It has passage 60' high and 40' wide. At least 400' have been seen. Anyone out there knowing of more caves in the crater, let Richard or us know.

- Mapping has continued in the **Freudian Complex** from the Double Barrel Cave since the NSS convention ended. Ray Miller, Bill McGahey (a caver from Rogue River, OR) & Liz Wolff have mapped to the Drawing Room. The trend of the system will be harder to follow from this point due to the roof being thinner, tubes lower, surface sinks very shallow and pumice filled, and small dimension breakdown floored tube sections. Three possible routes are heading south: one ends in a lava seal, one in breakdown, the last in an entrance with no continuation. The hike to the survey end is over 3/4 mile from the end of the "road". Total passage now stands at nearly 4 miles.

– **Bat counting** with Dixie Pierson in **Bat, Teeter Rock, and Insanity Culvert** Caves. We counted about 200 in Bat's maternity roost, 200 in Insanity Culvert, and a disappointing 7 individuals in Teeter Rock. Jim Kottinger, Ray Miller, and Liz Wolff went on the Wednesday and Thursday trips with USFS biologists Mary Faustini and Mark?

Scorpion Cave Trip Report by Jay Swofford

The field trip to Scorpion Cave on August 11 turned out to be one of the best caving trips the author has ever been on. Six people (Jim W, Jim K, Cindy Wright, Bill McGahey, Mary Faustini, & I) made the hike into the cave. The hike itself is worth a trip report.

The cave was located without difficulty. Upon entering I led the way down the Chute. This was accomplished through the use of a hand line which had been rigged earlier in the week. After reaching the bottom, the group advanced on into the Cathedral Room. Here Jim K took pictures, while Bill, Cindy, Mary, & I went to look at the Step Across. A nice nest of cave pearls were seen on the way. Upon our return Jim W joined us in a descent of the pit in the floor. Here I led them to the Big Room. This room added enjoyment for everyone as they individually explored its expanse.

Bill and I traveled the unmapped upper level passage from the Big Room back to the Cathedral Room. This passage definitely has some photo possibilities! Upon our return the party headed back to join Jim K who was still waiting in the Cathedral Room. While we were gone, Jim K had explored a side passage and taken numerous pictures. Since we still had The Hike we headed out of the cave. On exiting the cave we removed the rope for future use.

The memories will last a lifetime:

Cindy: Will remember to take a headlamp so all those imposing heights will no longer scare her so bad.

Bill: Will have dreams of a cave passage that goes forever by him at lightning speed.

Jim K: Will have many great photographs and will know that he can still hike into the worst of caves and still enjoy it.

Jim W: Will remember for the next 5 years why he didn't return for 5 years to do that hike.

Mary: Will have good memories of a wonderful time in a place where humans aren't natural.

I will remember what virgin passage feels like
and how much fun it is to help someone else enjoy a cave.

Now, the Rest of the Scorpion Story by George Reel [& the real facts in brackets by Liz Wolff]

I felt, with the bad pack straps, the heat, and the fact that I was way out of shape, I would return to camp and wait with Liz for the rest to return from the cave. Liz asked if I would like to join her on a short hike to [Tannen] lake so she could do some drawing. That sounded good: a short hike, a rest by the lake. Should have known better. She had the map. She took one look at it, said let's go this way. This way?? Over the bank. I mean 73.5 [60] straight down. Even the ground squirrels had strung ropes and were using descenders. They weren't even trying to come back up this cliff. "Here's a deer trail, let's follow it." How did she know? Deer? No way, mountain goat maybe! And if it was, it belonged to a strong young goat. Bush whacking all the way for us. Most of the time all we had to hang on to were thorn bushes [alder, gooseberry] with the shortest thorn at least 4" [1/2"] long and designed to break off half way through your hand so you would require major surgery when you got home (if we got home). These needles didn't miss any part of the rest of your body either. Then we came to the real steep and bushy part of this mountain. The early part of this trip seemed like a cake walk compared to what we had ahead of us now. I don't want to give you the wrong impression as to how steep this mountain was, but it is used for practice by people planning to climb Mt Everest. At this time a chain saw would have been of great help. None handy, so onward and downward. We cleared a trail with only our bodies [I let George go first]. After arriving at the bottom, looking back, the only thing missing from the trail that we made was a white line down the middle – the next day I received a thank you card from the animals in the area thanking us for the road saying how nice it was to have such a nice highway so they could get to the lake. We got to the lake, worked our way around to the other side where Liz said she wanted to do her drawing. I had just settled down for a well deserved rest [2 hr nap] when Liz returned saying that there was too much wind for a good reflection on the water and did not want to draw anymore – let's have lunch.

That was the best thing I had heard all day. Then, time to return to camp. Choice – back up the way we had come, impossible, or find the trail to the road and hike on the road. The trail was our only hope. It was at this time I learned that Liz had left the map in camp. Pick a trail, one out of four. Not bad odds. Three had signs telling where they would end. So we took the one with no sign. Good choice. The trip out was comparatively uneventful. The temp had climbed only to 102 [80] and everything was up hill. Aside from that and the fact that it was only 14 [4 1/2] miles back to camp made it a Sunday stroll in the park. Should have gone caving.

OTHER “NEWSY” STUFF...

– From the “Forest Service’s Chief and Staff Info Session Notes (7/18/90)...”

“... George Leonard and Jim Borden, a director of the Cave Research Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote cooperative cave management activities between the Forest Service and the CRF, especially at the local level. Agreements on specific projects will be required to implement activities. This agreement reinforces the USFS desire to be sensitive to caver resources, and to develop a better understanding of the values and management of cave resources.”

– The Southern California Grotto is putting together a working weekend this summer to gate and/or repair existing gates at **Church Cave**. The word is out for those willing to help, to make their willingness known. Church Cave is a limestone cave located in Kings Canyon on Sequoia National Forest land, under the protection of the Hume Lake ranger district. This gating is being done with USFS approval. The cave has 6 entrances, so many different gating situations should be encountered. This sounds like a good chance for us to develop our own gating ‘expert.’ Some of the lessons learned may help in our efforts to effectively gate Samwel. Coordinator for this effort is Don Delucia, 618 N. Paulina Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90277, (213) 318-1485. Inform Don if you are interested, and he will contact you when the date is set. Notice of this project was received just after the last RAG was printed, so it might be wise to call instead of write.

The SAG RAG
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