

Claude Smith, first SAG Chairman (RIP)

Inside: February 2025 Minutes, Memory Lane, Lake Shasta Caverns Update reports

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at various sites or homes on the fourth Saturday of most months at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, subject to changes by email. Membership dues are \$5 per year, due at the first of the year, and include SAG RAG subscription. Send dues to treasurer Melanie Jackson at 708 Yama St., Yreka CA 96097. Original material submitted for the SAG RAG, unless otherwise noted, is copyright to the SAG RAG. Within the caving community, such may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG. For use outside the cave community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication, always welcome for consideration, to Dave Smith, 321 Mesa Verde Ct., Chico, CA 95973 or <theotherdavesmith@gmail.com>.

SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Dave Smith and Dave Mundt

This issue includes maps to CJ and Kit McKinley's and to LAVA BEDS, and a note on the importance of meeting LABE expectations for protecting area bats from WNS and other diseases that may be of concern.

The issue also includes the cave calendar through August, and dates of planned grotto trips.

DS, DM

Cave Calendar through Aug. 2025

Steve Hobson

(Meetings begin at 7:00 pm on Saturdays unless otherwise noted.)

Apr 26	CJ & Kit McKinley's
May 17	LABE
June 26-28	Hat Creek
July 27-29	Dry Camp
Aug 27-Sept 3	Marbles, with packers

The April meeting is at CJ & Kit McKinley's in McCloud on the 26th at 7 pm. [6056 Snowline Circle, McCloud](#). I would like to offer a two day cave trip, camping experience. We would cave both Saturday and Sunday and have the meeting around the fire on Saturday night. Our property has plenty of space for camping, with a port-a-potty, tables and water available. This way, those of you coming from a distance would have multiple chances for caving and wouldn't have to leave so you could attend a meeting. Liz and Jim will be checking on FS Road 49 next weekend to see if we can get up to the ice caves for at least one of those days. I am open to suggestions for the other day.

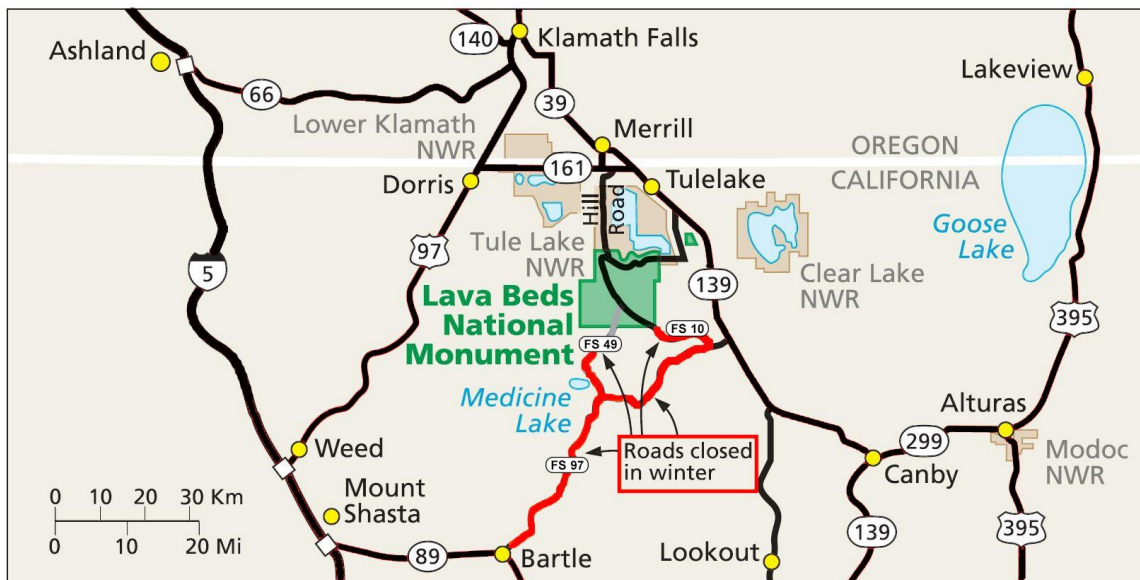
Please let me know if you are interested in this plan. Thanks. Have a great day. CJ McKinley 707-845-7988

(People can drive up Friday the 25th and go home Sunday or Monday, to have both Saturday and Sunday as caving days.)

Directions to CJ & Kit's:

- From McCloud take Hwy 89 east 3.6 mi to Pilgrim Creek and turn left.
- Continue 3.2 mi to Winton Way and turn left again.
- Continue 1.1 mi to Hotlum and turn right.
- Continue 0.8 mi to Widow Springs and turn right again.
- Continue 0.3 mi to Snowline Rd.
- Turn left and continue 0.2 mi to 6056 Snowline Circle

Directions to Lava Beds National Monument



From Dorris, Merrill or Tulelake take 161 to Hill Road and continue south on Hill Road to LBE headquarters and camping area. You will need to register at LBE headquarters. Also, be sure that all your clothing and cave gear are clean and ask staff about precautions that are in place to protect area bats from WNS and other diseases. Our rules, to avoid disturbing maternity colonies and hibernaculums, are to exit caves quietly if we see two or more bats. LBE staff will know if you're there at either of those times.

February 22, 2025 SAG meeting

Present: Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff

Chairman Steve called the meeting to order at 6:57 pm.

The minutes were accepted as corrected.

The treasurer's report began with a balance of 405.48; an expenditure of \$100, dues income of \$11 and a donation of \$150 for a bank balance of \$466.48. Petty cash was \$116, for a total balance of \$582.48.

Melanie sent a sympathy card to Mike & Barbara Stufflebeam following the death of his mother.

Sam Cuenca of the Klamath National Forest offered SAG a seat at the table during the management planning for Sattitla National Monument.

The Western Regional meeting this year will be Sept 26-28, 2025 in the Sequoia National Park. The region contacted Melanie about the Cal Caver. They are looking for new editors.

Liz finished her Cave Loop Resurvey project in January. During the meeting with Emma Sutphin and Jessica Reid we talked about the 2027 regional. The door is still open to hold the regional there and use the Research Center. Still need to know if we can use the conference room in the fire cache for the proposed speleo-ed seminar. Steve would like a meeting with the park early May or late April to discuss the possibilities.

Next meetings: March 22 at Wolff's (note the date change); April 26 at McKinley's; May 16 in Lava Beds; June Hat Creek camp.

Liz passed around a printed copy of the SAG history paper with a focus on the conservation/ governmental interactions and rescue sections.

The water diversion at Sand Cave needs work again. The cement failed that is holding the rocks in place.

Paint removal at Pluto's was discussed. It's a huge job and may not happen.

No cave trips; slide of trees, rocks and mud blocking the road to the reservoir caves.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

LW

A walk down Memory Lane....

You may have asked yourself recently “what was SAG up to **41 years ago** in March/April?” You asked, we listened! Pull up a chair and have fun reading a trip report from March 1984, with Jim and our first Grotto Chairman, Claude Smith!

RILEY’S CAVE 3/24/84 by Jim Wolff

I met up with Claude and his six-year-old son, Riley, at the Gilman/Salt Creek exit early Saturday. They had just gotten their new S-10 Blazer 4X4, so I somehow ended up hopping aboard for a ride. Since it was looking to be a low-key cave hunting trip, we opted to go back to a limestone ridge above Lake Shasta that some of us had looked at two weeks before. Besides, Claude was all set to show me his new finds he had run across that previous trip. As it turned out, before we could relocate his two caves, I found a couple on my own, so we regrouped at the nearest one.

I wanted Claude to have first whack at pushing this one, since when I had first found it, I had poked my head into a crawlway only to find that my grunting and struggling was returned by hissing and growling!! His reaction to this seemingly innocent crawl was the same, RETREAT! We wrote this one off as “dead-end” cave, to be, in the future, referred to as “Guardian Cave.”

The next cave was the first one I had found that morning, which I felt had the most potential, and it had good air flow out of it. From what I could see everything looked and felt like cave; flowstone exposed to the daylight and a rimstone dam across the floor – walking passage! I had also saved this one – to be shared with my friends. So, while we ate just inside the sinkhole entrance area, we conjured up wild thoughts of what lay ahead

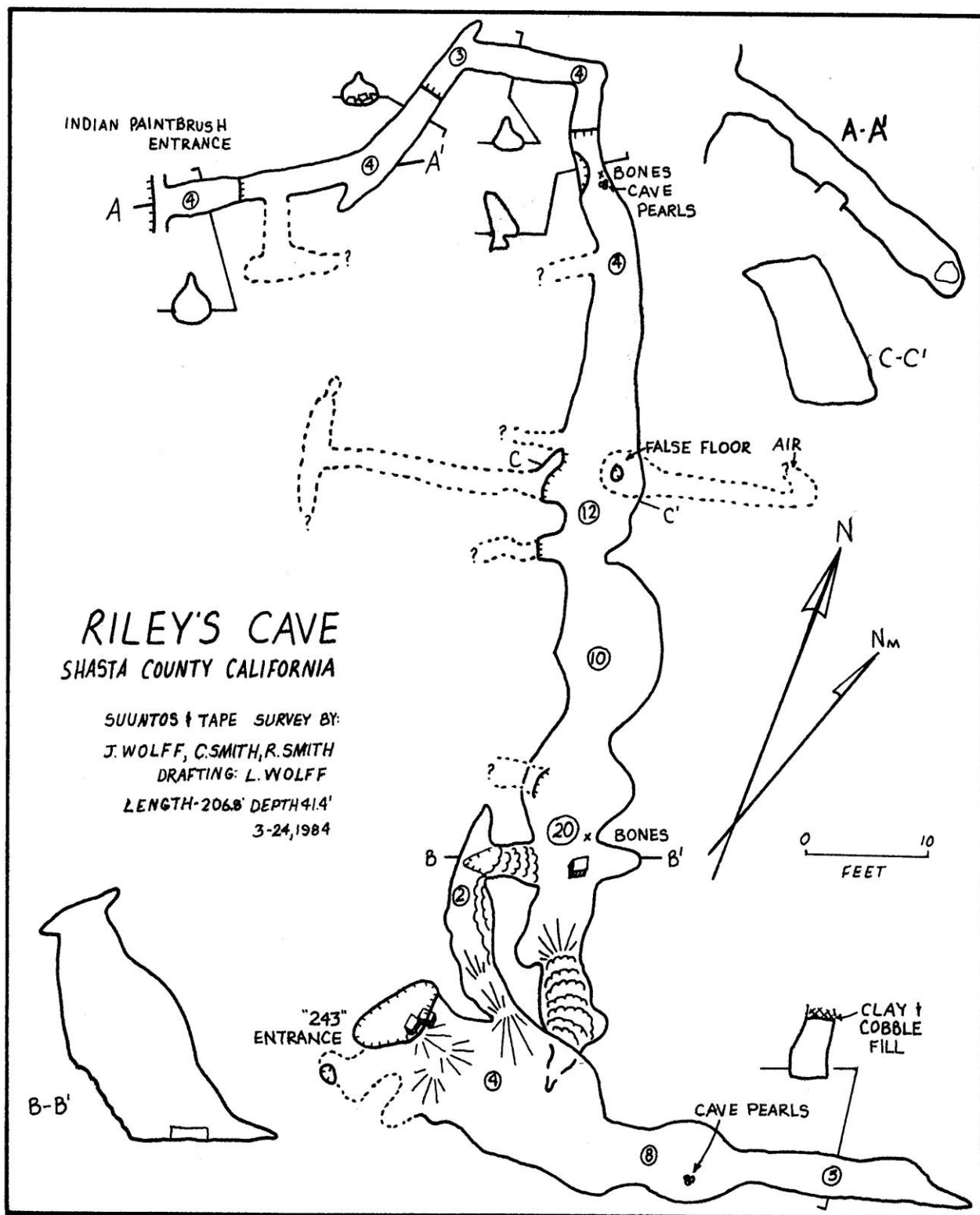
After eating, we started surveying in (really quite hopeful, eh?). Right after the first station, the next took us, straight as an arrow, back to the end of the passage. How disappointing! But where did that air come from?? There was a little hole in the back end that didn’t seem to account for it. At the entrance area, though there was some stuff going off, it didn’t turn out to be much

But then, there was another eight-inch-diameter hole, right behind where we sat to eat, that had some wind coming out of it – and it looked diggable! Claude dug in a fury, enlarging the hole faster than I can write this sentence! I volunteered to go in and down a two-foot-wide passage with a flowstone covered wall. It led steeply down and around a corner to a twenty-foot pit!! It was climbable, so I quickly climbed down into a large room And what a discovery! The place wasn’t terribly decorated, but what was there, was real clean, clear and white. Claude and Riley were able to hear all my goings-on and exclamations, so I soon asked for their

company. Claude instructed his son to sit tight at the entrance while he and I checked things out.

After joining me, we started systematically checking all that we could, leaving many leads unchecked, to be looked at during our survey. We quickly traversed this 100-foot-long room, to a crawl leading off above a nice pocket of cave pearls and some bones. Following the wind and after a few doglegs in the passage, the roomy crawl led upwards to sunlight! Walking overland, we joined up with Riley at the sink entrance, where we grabbed our survey gear and returned to this new way in. Riley joined us this time, since we felt that he could handle most of the journey through the cave. Besides, he did help with the survey, by unsnagging the survey tape a couple of times.

The main passage of that room had many ledges with leads going off, and some crawls at floor level with room enough to push but looked too muddy and wet for the time being. One lead I pushed started off as a crawl below a false floor. It led steeply downwards and had some airflow. This clay-lined tube took me to a sharp hairpin turn that looked impossible without digging some. A good possibility, as it continued to be bigger, and went out of reach of my lamp. We sketched a few more passages into the map, because of time constraints, but we saw at least 150-200 feet of additional passage beyond what we mapped. Not bad for a day's work.



PATRICK'S POINT CAVE 4/14/84 by Jim Wolff

The day after the grotto meeting at the south jetty of Humboldt Bay (next to Eureka, Ca.), Dick LaForge, Claude Smith, Neils Smith and I met up with Mark Stoute and Roger Jones at Patrick's Point State Park. We had to pay two dollars for day use! I wonder what it would have cost us if we had mentioned to the park ranger that we were going into their pit? According to Dick, they wouldn't think kindly of us and probably would try to discourage us.

Patrick's Point Cave is fault-type or block-creep in origin, with a series of fissures and pits, all interconnected with most of the passages in a total dark zone. Dick and friends mapped the cave many years ago but has yet to explore all the potential of this deep cave.

The main entrance is a near 160 foot drop to the floor below! It is a free rappel, with only two places where the rope just briefly touches rock. A 200-foot rope is handy to rig this one. At about 70 feet down from the beginning, there is a wide ledge that you can swing over to, and from there it is possible to continue in both directions. Aid climbing is needed in some upper reaches of the northern end of the cave. Unexplored areas beckon in this area as well.

When Dick and I were both on what appeared to be the bottom, it turned out to be the top of a very steep and loose rubble slope with leads in two directions. One way is to the "big cliff entrance." The other way goes down past another nasty 20-foot pit that leads to the true bottom of the cave. At the bottom is a freshwater table, then a tight (and still unchecked) canyon with air movement. Above the virgin lead, a climb leads to some serpentine rock interbedded with the parent rock of Franciscan formation. The cave continues in many areas as high and inaccessible canyons. In many places the cave is much too wide to chimney and few handholds are available.

On the way out of the cave, Dick noticed a rope hanging off one corner of the entrance pit. A knotted rope and well abraded. Goldline rope it was, now stiff and heavy with mud – handled something like wire cable. I wonder what brave (?) soul went down on that! After a couple of gentle tugs, it came down! Other interesting debris of note were: beer cans and bottles, broken flashlights, and a climber's large chock, minus its sling. We carried out the rope and some trash.

All in all, it was well worth the trip over there. Thanks go out to Dick for showing us this fine cave.

Lake Shasta Caverns Lighting Project – We're Open Again! By Dave Mundt

On January 6th, Lake Shasta Caverns held its last tour with the old lighting system (installed in the early 1960's) in preparation for the installation of a brand-

new system of wiring and lights. The 1960 transformer was removed, the lights went out, and over an estimated mile of wiring was stripped out of the cave. About 200 light fixtures were removed, and even the stanchions and brackets were cut down to the ground. The cave went through the biggest lampenflora removal project in history, pressure washing and scrubbing the cave clean! Other than the man-excavated tunnels, pathways and handrails, the cave had been restored to its natural state.

We hired a European company, Cave Lighting, to install the new system of wiring and lights. LSC is the second cave in the US (after Natural Bridge) to have used Cave Lighting). Cave Lighting staff from Germany, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania all descended upon us and began the immense job of rewiring and relighting the entire cave. The cave was divided into seven zones, and three power cabinets were installed and linked by fiber optic and mapped to the zones. The power cabinets control 400 (400!) LED “luminaries” using DMX to allow incredibly flexible control! As they worked in the cave, it made me think of what the project was originally like – dark tunnels, there were rocks all over the pathways, tools, rolls of cable and wiring, boxes of equipment everywhere, workers wearing caving helmets and headlamps.



This new system utilizes 240 VAC but steps it down to 24 VDC. We were consuming 7,000 Watts of power with the old system, which now we will only be

consuming 1,700 Watts (over 75% less power consumption). This paves the way for a future project, a solar conversion.

Tour Guides now carry small remote-control devices! I helped design “entry scene” for what a tour sees when they are guided into a room. Most of the lights are dimmed or off, then the guide pushes a button on the remote, and illumines the room with what we call the “reveal scene” that brings up all the lights slowly, but not all of them are at the same temperature (i.e. brightness). Because the software is an app that I can access in the cloud, I can even monitor the system from my phone! But I would never, ever turn the lights off on a tour guide remotely. Ever. 😊

Discovery Room Entry Scene:

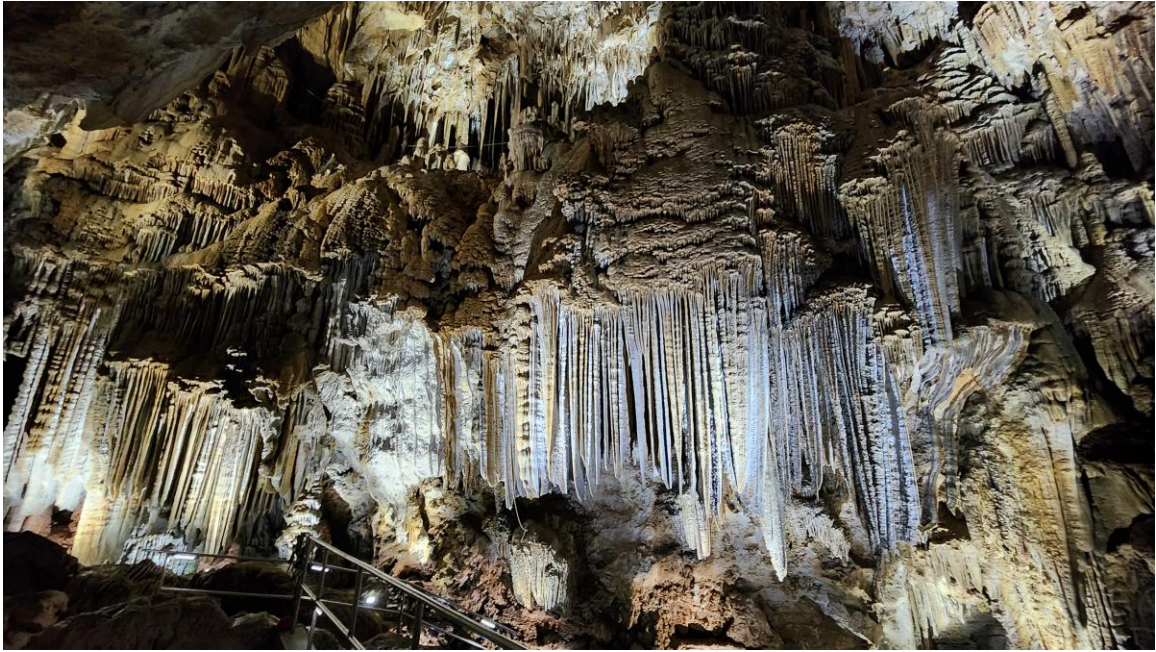


Discovery Room Reveal Scene:



Interesting enough, the cave is slightly darker, but much more beautiful. Shadows are very much enhanced, giving the cave a greater 3-D look than ever

before. Flashlights tend to “flatten” the beauty of the 3-D aspects, so several tour guides and I are now using lasers to point out various aspects. The Cathedral Room is now even more breathtaking than ever!



Because we have DMX technology with LED lights, we now have a magnificent show at the end of the tour in the Cathedral Room! The show was designed explicitly for our cave, capturing the creation, discovery, construction for a show cave, and the beauty and power. I’ve had several guests, and employees too, become moved with emotion and shed tears!

The lights also provide a much more environmentally friendly ecosystem for the cave. By greatly reducing the illumination footprint (e.g. dimming the lights between the rooms), the growth of moss/lampenflora will be significantly reduced.

Although we are open, on June 6th, National Cave & Karst Day, we will be hosting a ribbon cutting for the new lighting!

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TO:

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