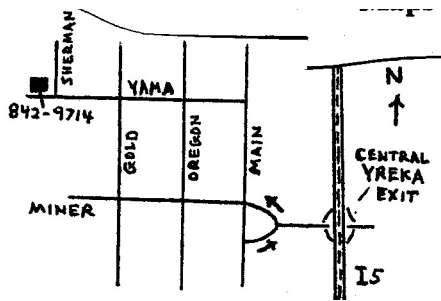


The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Grotto meetings are held at different locations the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. 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 or <jbroeckel@snowcrest.net>. For more on SAG, check the web site at <http://www.caves.org/grotto/sag>.

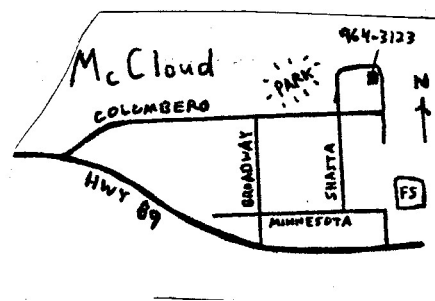
CAVERS CALENDAR 2004

July 1-?	KMCTF Speleocamp, Marble Mountains.
July 3	-1.9 low tide at 0700.
July 9	SAG meeting at home of Melanie Jackson, Yreka.
July 12-16	NSS Convention, Marquette, Michigan.
July 24-Aug 2	Speleofest in Alberta, Canada, www.caving.ab.ca/subweb
August 13	SAG meeting at home of Wolffs, McCloud.
October 2-3	Western Regional in Sonora c/o Diablo Grotto.

Maps to Meetings



JULY 9 7:30 pm



AUGUST 13 7:30 pm

SAG RAG SUMMARY (for convenience of CAL CAVER)

This time a Trojan got my computer, so here goes another typewriter and tape SAG RAG. This special June 2004 edition is a trip report from the Shasta Area Grotto trip of May 14-16, 2004 to the Jackson Mountains of Nevada. Liz Wolff adds some original line drawings, and there are articles, poem, photos, and cave maps from the trip. Bighorn continues to afflict the readers with detailed reports on miserable and marginal caves. In this latest example, rat-infested Ginger and Jasmine Caves are in the 30 foot range. They were named for the awful smell, with apology to any Jasmines or Gingers out there.

SHASTA AREA GROTTTO MEETING May 15, 2004

There was no formal meeting, however, there was an item of business. It was agreed to move the June grotto meeting and camp-out from Hat Creek to Lava Beds, so as to coincide with the dedication of the Visitors Center and Research Facility scheduled at Lava Beds National Monument at that time. Watch for a report of that event, and the Catacombs rescue, in the next issue of the SAG RAG coming out toward the end of August.

COVER: Liz Wolff draws SAG base camp On the Black Rock Desert of Nevada.

BB

CAVING IN THE JACKSON MOUNTAINS

By Bighorn Broeckel

Out on the Black Rock Desert, the roads go really far
Through dried up lands full of dust that messes up your car
In towns such as Denio, you can't find any gas
So you ride along on empty, over nails and broken glass

Bring a gas can and a jack, or you might not make it back,
When you go caving in these mountains.

We stopped to ask a mule, who was standing by a fence
If he knew of any caves, but he acted rather dense
He stared at us awhile, and, he didn't say a word
Then with a stupid smile, he went back to his herd.

The locals don't know jack, and you might not make it back,
When you go caving in these mountains.

The desert might be lovely, for a day or two in spring
But watch out for the flies and snakes, and other things that sting
If you bring lots of water, extra gas, and fix your flats
And you do find any caves, they will be full of rats!

All the rabbits are named Jack, and you might not make it back,
When you go caving in these mountains.



Campsite on the Black Rock Desert

BB

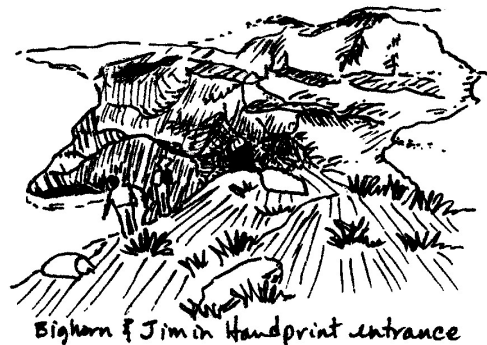
No Caves Here To Speak Of or A Weekend Of Karst-walking

By Liz Wolff

Friday morning Russ Yoder and Jim & Liz Wolff met at Bill Kenney's place in Klamath Falls preparatory to driving out to the Jackson Mountains in Nevada. Loading Kenney's stuff, we headed for adventure in Nevada. After an early lunch in Lakeview, our plan was to top off gas tanks at Denio Junction, but found the entire place had closed in October (boondockers are still welcome??). Denio has no gas either, but Fields, OR, 25 miles up the pike, does: \$2.559 per gallon. Ouch.

The Jackson Mountains are in the Basin and Range Province, which means wide, flat valleys are separated by near vertical cliff-faced ranges of mountains. Our camp was at about 4000' elevation, Handprint Cave is about 700' higher, with the cliff tops at about 5800'. Behind those cliffs the range rises to nearly 7000'. The limestone exposure is about three miles in a north-south direction, and about a mile and a half east-west. It is cut by three canyons, Alaska, Bliss, and an unnamed one. We found that anything that wasn't flat (basins) or vertical (cliffs) was at the angle of repose, or about a 33 degree slope. Some places seemed steeper. The vegetation is mostly juniper, sage of one variety or another, grease-wood, and other spiny and prickly stuff Wildflowers abounded. The stream courses had some water in them, and were nearly choked in places with willow and a very spindly bush with pink flowers. We found tracks of deer, cows and horses high on the scree above the cliffs, but saw few of any variety of critters except rabbits. One snake and a few lizards were seen. Cliff swallows flew melodiously above camp and around the cliffs. Black flies and some mosquitoes existed to annoy us.

After arriving at Handprint Cave and setting up camp, we headed for the first canyon south. It has no name, but contains a cathedral-like arch of immense proportions. There being no easy way up any of the hills or canyons, we opted to walk in the creek. A bit wet, but by far the easiest way to go. Then up the hills at the angle of repose to find there is no cave associated with that arch. No matter, several other openings were visible on the limestone cliffs on the north side of the canyon. Only one proved to be of interest to us. It was a nearly circular chamber about 15 feet diameter and 12 feet high, with a hole in the top. Many of the other holes had rat nests in them and were very dry and dusty. On the way back to camp Kenney and Russ entered Handprint Cave and did a quick look around, finding a maternity colony of bats, possibly *Tadarida*, above the climb up to the previously unexplored passage.

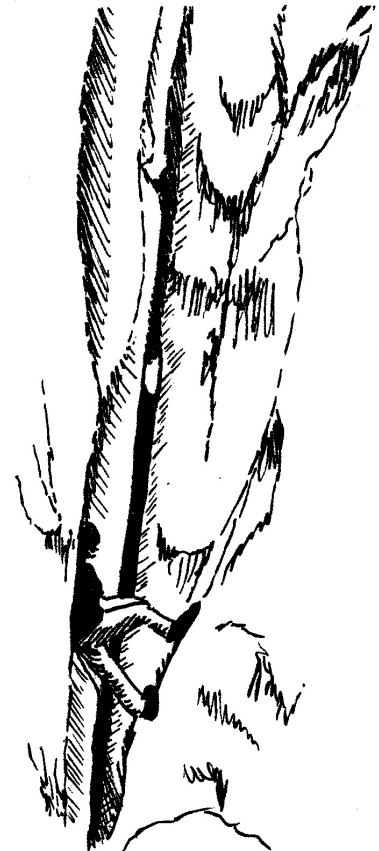


In camp that night, the wood stove was a welcome addition to an otherwise cool and windy evening. The wall tent was left to the snoring parties for the night, and the brown recluse spiders. They were only interrupted by the arrival of Bighorn Broeckel at 2 am. He set up his solo tent inside the wall tent, to avoid some of the spiders and scorpions. Waking to a cloudy morning, we headed for Alaska Canyon, the first canyon north of camp, to try to get on top of the karst. I peeled off first to check some holes above the creek a short way into the canyon. The largest one was a fair sized shelter, with a horseshoe nail and wire, containing the remnants of a small flag, on a boulder in the entrance. We had seen these markers in other entrances, none of which went anywhere:

wire wrapped rocks, small cairn, or wire wrapped nails, as if someone was systematically marking entrances they had checked.

After checking the first couple of holes, I headed up along the cliff/scree contact, finding more holes, nothing human sized that went. Across the canyon I could see dark openings that would only be accessible with some technical climbing. Pretty soon I was at a break in the cliff allowing me to pass to the west side of the cliffs. Here, I began to make my way down and back to camp. As I made a quick trip out into the bushes, I chanced to look up to the cliffs above Handprint and saw one of the guys standing on the ridgeline. Not long after I returned, Jim, Kenney and Russ walked in to camp too. They had gotten pretty far up the karst, but the going became too steep for their comfort, and Bighorn was the only one to continue. He had one of the walkie-talkies and the other came back to camp. After a quick lunch, Kenney, Russ and I opted to head out again. We wanted to check for caves on the cliffs north of Alaska Canyon and eventually end up at Bliss Canyon, about two miles north. We found many openings, none of them went far, and the first one was right at the mouth of Alaska Canyon. It was blocked by a rat nest. We had traveled about a mile and a half, when we found a canyon heading south into the karst. Kenney made an executive decision and we abandoned the trek to Bliss Canyon for this unnamed one. It was narrow and steep sided. There is an arch about 40' wide near the top of one cliff, and holes in the walls, unreachable without a ladder. The narrow canyon became narrower and turned east, climbing up four small drops. Then it headed south again with an arch on the west wall and many more holes in the cliffs. A really nice feature was found, a slot canyon only a couple feet wide leading off to the northeast. The walls are smooth and slick, Kenney made his way toward the back of the slot and found a series of white scallops that rose toward the top of the slot. He managed to get into the lowest one.

From there, I opted to begin the return hike, as the sun was getting very low in the sky, but Russ and Kenney wanted to see more of the canyon. They found a large – 75'w X 30'h – arch connected to the cliff wall by a narrow band of rock, and with a bit of cave at the base of it. Looking around the area, they found a ladder in a niche around a corner from the entrance. Back at camp Kenney re-read the 1995 Oregon Grotto Speleograph account by Ed Block of finding that very arch, which at the time contained an eagle nest; the ladder was left there by some Fish & Wildlife people. I arrived back in camp after sunset, and after Bighorn, who will probably tell of his adventure elsewhere.



Kenney in slot canyon

Sunday morning after packing up most of camp, Bighorn and Jim headed up to Handprint, as Bighorn had never been there. Kenney, Russ and I finished packing up camp, ready to head out. **LW**

NW NEVADA CAVING TRIP

By Bighorn Broeckel

Jackson Mountains

This is one of the ranges in the basin and range country, one of a hundred or more mountain chains running north and south across the entire Sagebrush State. This one has a 1x3 mile blob of marble that rises up to 1,800 feet above the bleached-out lake bottom flats of the Black Rock Desert. Among other things, the Black Rock is famous for the notorious Burning Man Festival and for designated amateur rocket launching sites.

The Jackson Mountains have been recently declared Wilderness by legislation on 12-21-00. There are two units, north and south, divided by a road across the range. The BLM administrates the area, and maintains a wilderness website paraphrased as follows:

The dominant vegetation is sagebrush. Saltbrush and greasewood grow at lower elevations. Willows, aspen, & cottonwoods are found in riparian areas. Juniper trees thrive at higher elevations. Wildlife includes California Bighorn Sheep, Mule Deer, Pronghorn Antelope, Sage Grouse, Mountain Lion, and Coyote.

Walking the Jacksons

This place is a long drive from anywhere. I rolled in at 0200 and put up a little bivy tent inside the big Kenney tent to keep scorpions off me when I passed out. Liz Wolff cooked up eggs later on that morning of May 15, 2004. This was the one nice day of the year on the Black Rock Desert, so we soon set out to look for caves. Shasta Area Grotto was back in action in the Jackson Mountains of Humboldt County, Nevada.



Jim Wolff ridgewalking the Jackson Mountains

Here is a geology reference for the area of concern (1). "The most extensive rock unit in the Jackson Mountains is the Happy Creek igneous complex, which is bounded on both the east and west by older Paleozoic & Upper Triassic metasedimentary strata." We were in fact camped at the base of one of those metasedijobbers, a massive cliff of contorted, marblized limestone. It featured many apparent cave openings. Bill Kenney pulled out topos and aerial photos. I was more than ready

to spend a happy day scooping many miles of exotic, unknown cave passages.

Of course the others, with previous experience, knew the truth. In fact, Jim Wolff, Liz Wolff, Russ Yoder, & Kenney had already worn themselves out checking holes in the rock the previous day. Now not only has this outcrop been through metamorphic hell, uplifted and tilted at a wicked angle, but also exposed to harsh environmental conditions for eons of time. All this gives an otherworldly look



One of the smaller caves of the Jacksons.

to the rock. Most of the “cave entrances” actually turn out to be weathered alcoves, carved out by the waves of the ancient Lake Lahontan, or sandblasted by mighty Aeolian cyclones.

At the entrance to a likely canyon, Liz checked a couple rat holes and headed back to camp. Up above we took on the steep slopes, stopped for a snack, and Jim Wolff turned to follow Liz. On we climbed increasingly exposed pitches and false routes, until even Kenney and Yoder were ready to go down. We spotted the probable silhouette of a bighorn sheep. Taking this as a sign, I took the radio and continued on alone, determined to see the top of the exposed strata.

Back down at base camp, the others regrouped and had a good lunch. Three then hiked another very interesting canyon and saw better caves and things than I. Jim decided to manage

base camp the rest of the day, and later I was able to keep in contact with Jim over the radio.

He hiked out into the desert to achieve a more favorable radio signal angle. At this time he found and GPS located an obsidian scraping tool.

Finding Some Caves

Once on top, I spent the better part of the day looking for sinkholes. I imagined myself scrambling down through a great new cave a thousand feet or two vertical, and popping out the rock somewhere down by camp. Every flat or semi-flat place I could find got checked. There were a few weathered surfaces, but no sinks. I ran some gullies looking for insurgences ---- nothing. In fact, I found no evidence for any underground drainage whatsoever.

However, there was one marble knob that showed a few signs of solution, even some small caves. Later on I realized these were the best caves I was going to see, so I zipped back up to do solo surveys of the finest ones. These were actually totally rat infested nerd holes, but they still provided a shady

place to hide from the burning sun of the Black Rock afternoon. I named the two caves Jasmine and Ginger as a joke about the aromatic qualities they contained. The smell in these caves was a truly terrible thing. Passage lengths were 30 and 31 feet respectively. I don't think people will be stampeding the Jackson Mountains on account of these particular caves.

After this odiferous idyll, I used another canyon for descent and was back in camp well before dark.

Handprint Cave

The next morning, Jim Wolff gave me the guided tour of Handprint Cave. A walk-in entrance opens to the main hall. Some dusty flowstone ledges on the left had a number of stalagmites the size and shape of barrel cacti. The view from here shows the main chamber, looking like the borehole to Kentucky. Unfortunately, it actually ends rather soon.

We crossed a depression filled in with meters of dry dung. Great clouds of dust would rise with each step. We wore surgi-



Calcite cascade from entrance to small cave.

cal masks, and this worked, in that we did not blow mud puppies from the nostrils for the next 24 hours. Apparently, deep in one of the test pits, some material was dated as follows (2): "Gruhn and Bryan's significant charcoal date of $10,700 \pm 70$ RCYBP (Beta 21885) was associated with the exquisite small stemmed point from Handprint Cave".

We were in the lower of the two short passages at the cave's end, when it happened. A few bats shot out of their day roosts, and circled in the main room. We quickly left the cave and returned to camp.

Ed and Kathy Block reported Handprint Cave in 1995 (3). Photographs and a sketch map were included. Shasta Area Grotto surveyed the cave and produced another map in 2002 (4). The maps are quite similar, and obviously are showing the same cave.

On the way home, the lack of available gas in Denio caused some trouble. Anyone heading into this area from the west should fill up in Lakeview.

Lake Lahontan (5)

The melting of ice at the end

of the last great ice age resulted in the formation of a large lake in northwest Nevada known as Lake Lahontan. At about 12,700 years ago, this lake topped out at an elevation of 4,390 feet. This is known as the "Sehoo Highstand". The Jackson Mountains, and Hand-print Cave, were part of a large island surrounded by Lahontan waters. Even the Sehoo Highstand was still below the level of Handprint Cave. Our campsite, however, was way under water. Even now the bathtub rings are still visible on the slopes above camp.

Lake Lahontan did not completely dry up. Honey, Pyramid, and Walker Lakes are modern remnants of the ancient lake. The survival of the quini sucker fish establishes the continuity of the water over time. Also, the presence of the Lahontan Cut-throat Trout in Pyramid Lake contends that Lahontan once had an outlet to the sea.

Traditional interpretation brings humans to the shores of Lahontan 10-12,000 years ago, in the Clovis Period. At this same time, large animals such as the woolly mammoths disappeared. Scientists are currently massing evidence in two



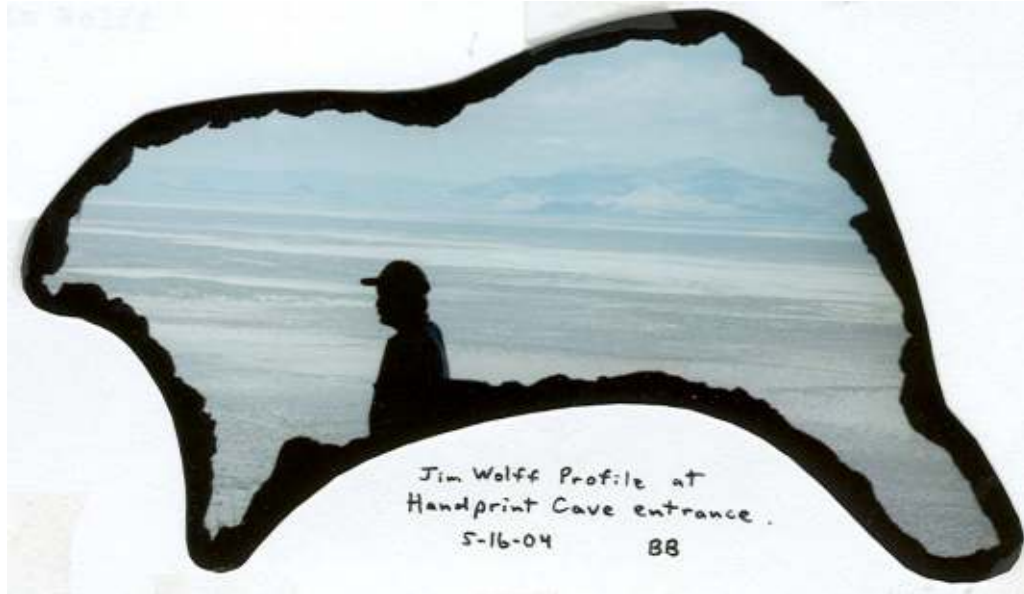
Fig.1 Pleistocene Lake Lahontan with modern features for reference. Extent of lake was 8,500 sq. miles!

directions. First, to move up the high level mark of Lake Lahontan. Shore features are being described as high as 4,600 ft from times in the more distant past. The other direction is to find the signs and artifacts for people here before the Clovis Period. **BB**

References on last page.



Marble knob showing solution features.



Handprint Cave

By Jim Wolff

Here is a brief (for me anyway) in a nutshell description of the recent trip to Handprint Cave

After a couple of days climbing around the hills looking for caves that went, I had the opportunity to revisit Handprint again, this time with Bighorn. Everyone else was busy breaking down camp and getting ready for the long trip home. It was a longer trip for some as there were few gas stations that were open... anyway, that's another story.

The cave hasn't changed much in the year or two since I saw it last, but still quite impressive! If one climbs up near the ceiling on the left, upon entering the cave, your eyes or lights find it hard to reach the far wall of flowstone, and can only illuminate the breakdown slope below. Big room!

We were told by Yoder and Kenney that they had noticed some bats in the cave, and we were especially quiet as we toured the room. Upon climbing up toward the upper, unmapped lead, Bill saw one bat fluttering around, so we beat a hasty

retreat to the entrance. We had seen most of the cave, and didn't feel any obligation to push further as there must have been many more bats up there.

Caves and shelters in the cliffs of these mountains contain all kinds of critters, and caution should be employed upon entering them. Although we did not see any, there must be rattlesnakes, and other venomous creatures using the shade that the rock provides. We know that one shelter has been used by Golden Eagles too, so be aware.

But have fun as there are lots of holes to look into, as any of us can vouch for.

I forgot to give Kenney credit for getting the tent, table, stove, and lantern there. And for Yoder patching and filling my flat tire! It's amazing that we were able to get to some form of civilization before we ran out of gas! There's some big country out there, so always be prepared for the inevitable breakdowns, etc. because you're kinda on your own. Thanks to all my friends for the success of the trip!

I also forgot to mention that I had opportunity to walk a 1/2 mile of an old wagon road that was west of camp and ran N-S.

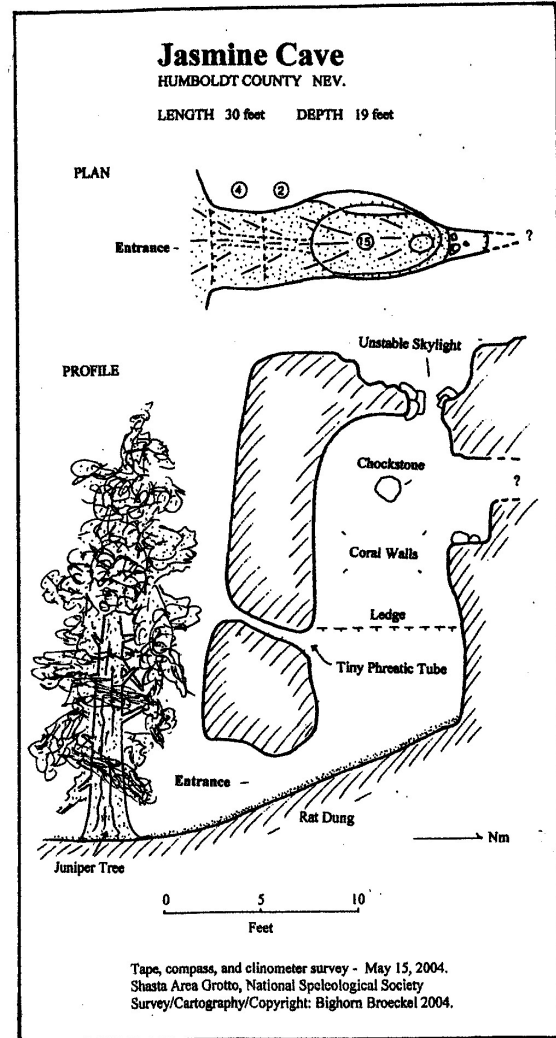
I found an obsidian flake tool, probably a scraper. I left it there, but got a good GPS fix on it. I tracked the wagon road with my GPS, but have not been able to download it to my map program since I don't have a Nevada CD collection. **JW**



Wolff Managing Base Camp 5-15-04



Hidden entrance to Jasmine Cave. Note bamboo stick used to check holes for snakes.



Map: Jasmine Cave

Jasmine Cave

By Bighorn Broeckel

The skylight on the top of this cave was the first sign I saw. It was the closest thing to a sinkhole that I had found all day. It is not really a pit, but more a crumbling in the ceiling of the dome. This dome is the fundamental feature of the cave. It would be possible to dig enough rocks out of the roof to enter the cave. First, however, I felt I should check for other entrances. Sure enough, I found a perfectly good main entrance lurking behind a Juniper Tree down below.

This phreatic opening measured 4x4 feet. The passage height dropped to two feet right away, so I had to crawl up the loose slope of rat dung mixed with fragments of juniper nest material. Having dealt with the dung crawl with as much caver dignity as possible, it was time to stand up and look around.

This was not such a bad spot. A bit of light filtered in through a tiny tube and through the rocks in the ceiling 15 feet above the floor. The walls of the dome were relatively clean showing some rough popcorn texture really nice for climbing. The dome was more narrow up

higher, and held a choke stone. A narrow passage headed into the mountain from a high ledge. After just a few feet, it became too tight.

Jasmine cave contains much evidence of rodent habitation. It was named for the bad smell. The cave is 30 feet in passage distance and 19 feet in total depth. It was surveyed on a Shasta Area Grotto weekend trip in May of 2004. **BB**



Walking entrance to Ginger Cave

Ginger Cave

By Bighorn Broeckel

To reach the entrance of this cave, traverse gingerly across an exposed cliff. Like nearby Jasmine Cave, Ginger was named for the foul odor. In fact, Ginger smells even worse than Jasmine.

The entrance is four feet wide and eight feet high. A walking passage slopes up with a floor cov-

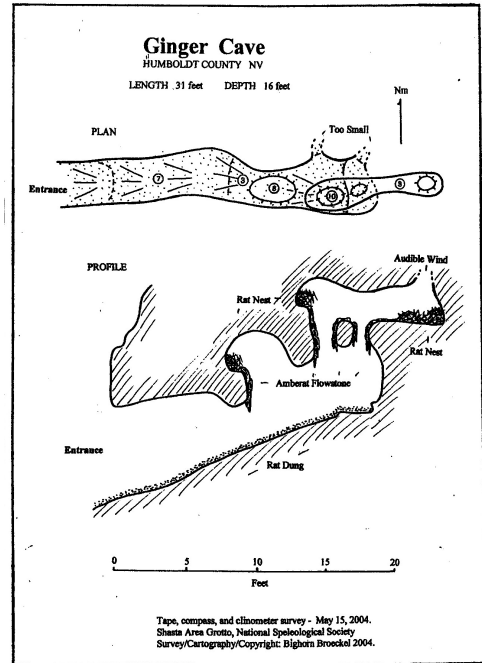
ered with dung and vegetable matter, much like Jasmine Cave. A duckunder leads to the inner chamber of Ginger Cave.

The ceiling is formed by a complex of small domes. Every possible ledge holds a rat nest of sticks. Brown cascades of amberat emerge from each nest, looking for all the world like flowstone speleothems. I suppose that is what they are.

A pull up to an amberat squeeze is required to enter the upper level. Here the body length passage is impinged by the rat nests. In the back, a vertical tube goes straight up. This was too small for me, but wind sounds were audible. I believe this was the general afternoon outside wind whipping around in the next entrance up the cliff from Ginger Cave.

The amberat squeeze was a novelty, really not such a bad material to jam through. Never-the-less, my over all impression: --- this was a truly disgusting cave! Passage length was 31 feet, depth 16 feet. Ginger Cave was surveyed by Shasta Area Grotto in May of 2004.

BB



Map: Ginger Cave

Jasmine Cave



Ginger Cave

Marble knob showing solution features.

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SAG RAG
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STAMP

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