

sag rag

24:3

May-June 2005



Jim Wolff records GPS waypoint at the skylight entrance to Alice Cave.
Photo by Bighorn Broeckel 6-7-05 ©2005.

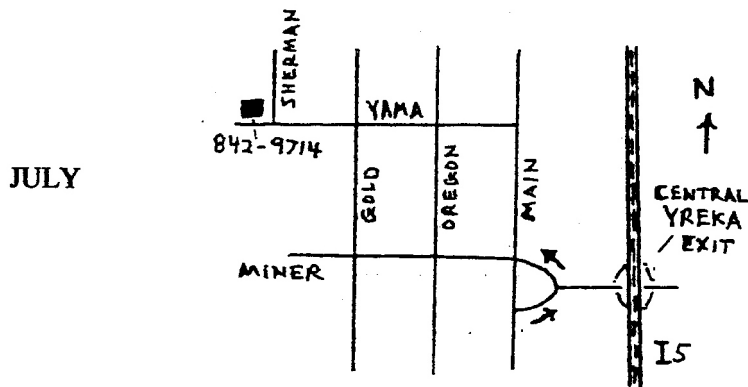
The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Grotto meetings are held at different locations the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. 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 2005

July 1-4	KMCTF Speleocamp in Siskiyou Co., contact Tom Kline (503) 786-0592.
July 4-8	NSS Convention, Huntsville, Alabama.
July 8-10	Falls Creek Cave camp, contact Russ Yoder (541) 890-0571. **
July 22	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Melanie Jackson's in Yreka (530) 842-9714.
August	SAG meeting, come to July meeting for info, call Yoder (541) 890-0571.
August 18-21	Siskiyou County lava cave camp, contact Russ Yoder (541) 890-0571. **
August 21-28	International Congress of Speleology, Athens, Greece.
September 16-18	Western Regional at Berkeley-Tuolumne Camp.
September 16-18	NCRC Introduction to Cave Rescue at Trout Lake.
September 24	Derrick Cave work day, contact David Draheim, (541) 947-6185. **
August 7-11, 2006	NSS Convention, Bellingham, Washington.

** Note: these are WVG (Willamette Valley Grotto) trips, so RSVP dennis_caver@msn.com

Map to the Meeting



SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

The SAG trip to Nevada in May was a wash, but Bruce Rogers comes through with a week of cave touring around the California deserts this last Spring. Dick LaForge fills us in with details on his educational cave program for school groups of the north coast of the state. Ray Miller brings up a good question on moth wings, long considered to be fast food wrappers from busy bats. Jim Wolff and Bighorn survey into a new room in Shebas Secret Cave (total cave length 139 ft.), making that the second longest of the nine caves found so far in the sequence. In other June news, Russ Yoder, Jim and Liz Wolff, Shakina Drew, and Michael Landrum surveyed over 500 feet of new passage in Mad Hatter Cave. The cave (1250+ ft.) still has more leads, so watch for the map in a future SAG RAG when that survey gets completed. Have a great summer.

BB

SHASTA AREA GROTTO MEETING May 13, 2005

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Russ Yoder at 8:01 pm in the home of Bill & Cheryl Kenney, Klamath Falls, Oregon. Present were Bill & Cheryl Kenney, Russ Yoder, Liz Wolff, Robert Nixon, and Ray Miller. Russ forgot to bring the previous minutes; treasurer's report was not available; Liz forgot to bring the correspondence; and Bighorn was not present to report on the SAG RAG. Robert reported that the website was "O.K.", but he has not yet added the newsletter or calendar features. Members present directed Robert, as webmaster, to black out any cave locations included in trip reports in meeting minutes that may reference caves already on a map.

Old Business: Ray continues to tweak a second draft of our mission statement. It will be available at the June meeting.

New Business: None.

Trip Reports: May trip to Nevada was cancelled due to low attendance and some flooding in the area. On April 23, Liz, Melanie, and Russ began the resurvey of Catacombs in LBNM, including cross-sections and vertical control. Liz and Ray checked out Black Stout Cave with the appropriate government official. It is an archeological site well dug up by pot hunters.

Next meetings: June meeting will be held at Hat Creek.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Kenney, acting secretary.

CK**LETTER TO EDITOR – CAVING EDUCATION ON THE COAST** By Dick LaForge

Dear Editor:

The (last SAG RAG) newsletter mentions educational efforts about caves. So I thought I'd mention some educational efforts we have been doing over on the coast.

I have a caving dog-n-pony act that I take to schools and have done twice this year. It's not something I actively promote, as my time is limited, but when I do get asked I get it out. These times were for grades K-3. The second one was at the school my neighbor Chris Witt's boy Clark goes to. Chris is also a caver and helped with the presentation.

We start by wearing our cave suits and lights (the room is darkened for the coming slide show) to get attention, and then we ask the kids if they have been in caves and what they know or think about them. Usually they have been talking caves in the class for some days before we come in. Then we show equipment around, having them think, what would you want to have when exploring a cave? Rope and vertical gear is interesting to them.

Then it's slide show time. Any cave photos will do as long as they show caves and people caving. We wind up with some big roll-out maps – the Bigfoot map from many years ago is a good one as it looks like an old pirate map and has interesting names for parts of the cave. Lurking Fear! Cool! We give a good conservation message and leave some old copies of the NSS News and the Time-Life book on caves with the school for the kids to look through during spare time later.

The kids always respond later with wonderful thank-you cards with great drawings on them. One school had, before I showed up, made a cave by taping cardboard boxes together and cutting connecting holes. This year it was about 12 feet long with some complexity and formations to avoid touching. They enjoy taking me blindfolded to the entrance (so I can't see where it is going to go) and stuffing me in (it's designed for 7-year-olds) and having me describe what I am going and finding. The cave has emergency exits in case anyone gets panicky, but they seem very comfortable with it.

Anyway, that's what we do over here occasionally.

DL

Reply: Liz Wolff's piece on caving education for inland schools was dated "2005" in the last SAG RAG, but it turns out that it was actually a year old. Never-the-less, it serves to inspire this educational report from the coast. I say three cheers to Liz, Ray, and Dick on these efforts.

BB

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of the 2005 DEATH VALLEY TRIP
 SFBC-MLG-Diablo-SAG-SJVG-SoCal Death Valley Expedition
 April 2-10, 2005 By Bruce Rogers

Fellowship of the Caves

Here's the executive summary. . . If you've got room in the SAG RAG, it might just fit . . . then again, it works equally well wrapping fish in . . . (Ed. No worries, usually the SAG RAG is entirely suitable for fish wrapping already as it is.)

Ray & Gale Beach, Bill & Peri Frantz, Steve Ruble & Barbara Maeso-Ruble, Dan Snyder & Martin Hays, Rolf & Denise Aalbu, Roger & Caroline Brown, and Pat & myself all arrived in Barstow on Sunday morning, April 3.

Rainbow Basin

We spent the day crawling around in the depths of Rainbow Basin National Natural Area. We found Owl Canyon Cave with little effort (as Bern Szulcinski said, "If you can't find it, you better resign from the NSS.") and were amazed at its delicate gypsum decorations along its fault-controlled length of about 65 feet.

Continuing, we explored two new caves – Topless Meander Cave (now lacking most of its root) and The Barstow Crawl (a smaller, more "close-contact-with-the-bedrock" cave) – and generally had a good time. That afternoon we journeyed over to adjacent Rainbow Basin proper and explored Rainbow Canyon Cave. The silt flowstone was outstanding in this short cave, mimicking that of normal limestone caves as was the general surface topography of sculpted badlands – it was definitely a place to revisit and do a little more hiking.

Red Rock Canyon

Monday we explored the confines of Red Rock Canyon State Park. I was unable to relocate both Whole Wheat and Phweeter Cleanbreak Caves, but after a half-day's hiking we found several new caves instead. A carpet of bright Yellow Monkey flowers (*Mimulus guttatus*) led up into B&B Cave, a jackstraw-pile, talus deathtrap of car-sized granitic boulders some 66 feet long. Conditions were so marginal that it was little effort to persuade Barb not to push the narrow chimney leading up into the pile of large boulders.



Mimulus guttatus

The walking passage of Mimulus Cave led 51 feet through amazingly fragile alluvial fan sediments to a hidden valley carpeted ankle deep with wild flowers. After this long day, we drove east to Stovepipe Wells and camped in Death Valley proper. A gourmet Moroccan dinner was prepared under the supervision of Martin Hays and Dan Snyder as all celebrated Dan Snyder's "24 and a little more" birthday. Wine flowed freely to accompany the frosted pound cake Pat prepared. Some days it is just hell out there in the desert.

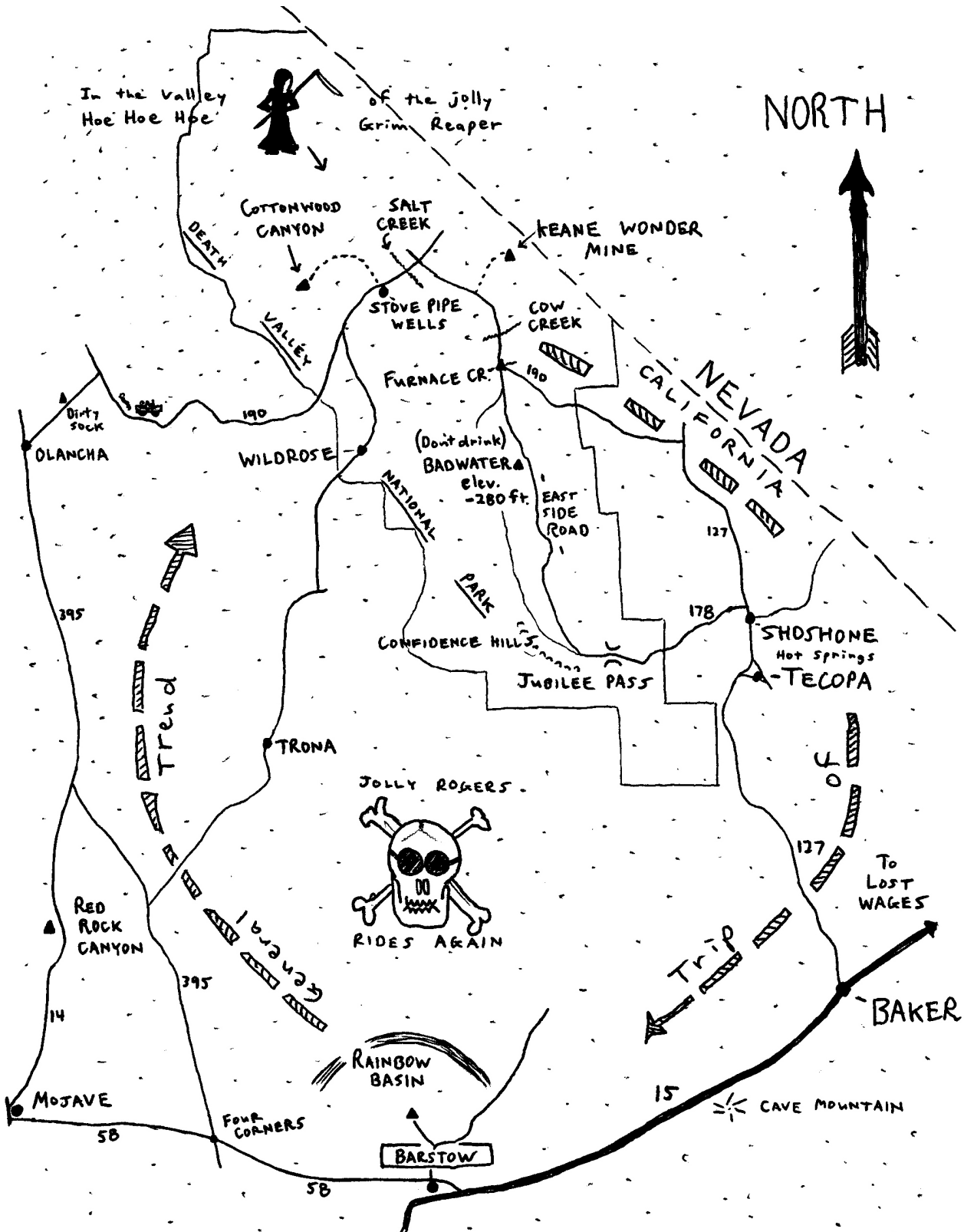


fig.1 ROCKING AROUND THE DESERT CLOCK WITH BRUCE ROGERS

Cottonwood Canyon

Tuesday, April 5th, we 4W-Drove up Cottonwood Canyon for the day. As was to be a pattern, I was again unable to find either Red Cave or Feather Pit (a pair of small limestone caves that we even have photos of their entrances. . .), but the outstanding petroglyphs and flower carpets kept us busy. We were also unable to find the ca. "1940's and on" traveler's register kept in a gallon jar in a rocky alcove near the First Narrows.

After a lunch & geology stop in the 70 ft.-diameter Cottonwood Cave (essentially a huge stream meander undercut), we drove and hiked up to Lower Cottonwood Spring. Many simply reveled in the stream or viewed a Panamint Rattlesnake (*Crotalus mitchellii stephensi*) at semi-close range. The stream was flowing much further down canyon than it has ever done in the last 45 years. Others hiked up to the springs and looked over more wildflowers before returning to Stovepipe Wells, leaving Rubles to camp at the First Narrows.

Salt Creek

Wednesday we went east to Salt Creek to look at the Salt Creek Pupfish (*Cyprinodon salinus salinus*) and wind-sculpted ventifacts (rocks naturally sand blasted into fanciful shapes) then drove over to Manley's Bar near Hells Gate, a gravel beach bar left over from ice age Lake Manley that filled Death Valley nearly 600 ft. deep some 11,000 years ago.

Keane Wonder Mine and mill were next on our itinerary. After a short hike north along the ca. 1905 pipeline to Keane Wonder Springs, we visited the olfactory-offensive sulfur springs and marshlands (!) and a car-sized natural limestone arch overlooking the site. Dan & I also went further north about a quarter-mile along the huge travertine apron that stretches 1.5 miles north.

We found and reconnaissance mapped 5 new caves: Keane Travertine Cave (~150 ft.), Crack-n-Mound Cave (~100 ft.), Dirty Crack Cave (~40 ft.), and Traverkeane Cave (~40 ft.); a fifth cave was too tight to enter without Barb Maeso-Ruble or Shannon Mathey around! These little caves had not only formed as tension-fracture caves, but then had been coated with extensive sheets of cream-colored flowstone, 18" long stalactites, and foot-high, fireplug-shaped stalagmites as well. We returned vowing to inspect the rest of the travertine on the next trip.

Cow Creek

Thursday, April 7th, we set sail down Death Valley on the Eastside Road. Stopping at North

Gnomes Workshop, we visited Furnace Cave, a small soil pipe cave near the highway at Cow Creek. This cave has enlarged since last visited in 1981 and a low crawlway led off for nearly 45 ft. further into the hillside for a total length of 64 ft. of cave. Several small squeaking animals were heard in a small side crevice (as was in 1981), but they were too shy to make an appearance.

In the adjacent gully to the north, Wallboard Cave (~55 ft.) had slightly enlarged since 1981 as had No Snakes Cave (~62 ft.) across the gully. Dan and Martin found a new cave under the intervening gully – as yet unnamed – that was about 48 ft. long and, if one were neutrino-sized, appeared to connect Wallboard and No Snakes Caves. The silt flowstone and rat-eaten 1950's-style clothes scattered all over the floor of Wallboard and the bat guano and a single, white, soda straw stalactite in No Snakes Cave were highlights of this visit.

Badwater

The wind rose as we drove further south to Badwater and took our obligatory stop at the saltpan. The new walkways were impressive as was the Day-glo green-colored waters (!) of two-mile-long Badwater Lake, apparently undergoing a once-in-a-hundred-years algae bloom despite the extremely high salinity. In the mile-high cliffs fronting the Black Mtns. above Badwater are many large tafoni shelters formed by aerosol salt crystallizing in the 1.7 billion-year-old metamorphic rocks and wedging them apart.

Coyote Hole

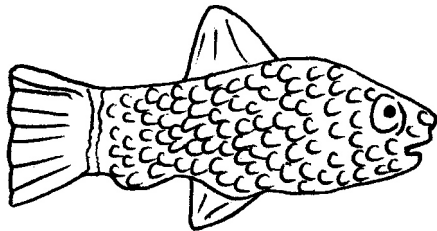
Our travels next stopped near Coyote Hole where several of us (led by some no-count rock mocker who has shown little sense in these sort of things) made a death-defying climb up crumbling Precambrian rocks to 60 ft. long Gneiss Cave. This little cave has formed in a jelly-roll of 1.7 billion-year-old dolomite marble. The salt stalactites and stalagmites were long wind-blown away, but the view west over the saltpan was impressive. This is the "deepest cave in North America," being at an elevation of -207 ft.!

The wind rose to higher gusts as we camped near the very end of Death Valley just east of the Confidence Hills in the wild flower-bedecked Confidence Wash. Peri & Bill Frantz supervised another gourmet chicken casserole dinner that was followed by Denise Aalbu's Camp Stove Beignets (that were rolled out using a yet-to-be-emptied wine bottle!) that left the multitudes nearly unable to rise. That night it blew very hard, but no one was awake to complain about it.

Shoshone

Friday we drove east over flower-decked Jubilee and Salsberry Passes to Hill 1999 north of Shoshone. There, intrepid explorers plumbed the depths of vertical Upper & Lower Shoshone and horizontal Turk Shoshone Caves for most of the day. Another segment of the troops visited the Shoshone Museum and the surrounding wild flower-carpeted area. That evening the weather broke and the Aalbu's left for the shelter of relatives in Henderson, NV.

Part of the group camped at Tecopa Hot Springs County Park while I wrangled access to the "Meditation Room" at the adjacent Delights Hot Springs Resort where we had leftover chicken casserole. All soaked in the hot springs pools for the evening. It blew very hard and even rained a bit on us, but no one seemed to care after far too much food and wine.



PUPFISH

"At isolated Devils Hole, at Saratoga Springs and in Salt Creek which flows in the center of the valley, live small gray-bodied fishes called *cyprinodonts*, believed to be descendents of fishes which lived in ancient Lake Manly (named to honor William Lewis Manly 1820-1903 who helped to lead the starving Bennett-Arcane party out of Death Valley in 1849). ... Lake Manly (Pleistocene) is supposed to have been of comparatively short duration and finally dried up. But in isolated pools, streams and water holes which have persisted the fishes in small numbers have lived on, gradually changing their physiology with the changing conditions such as warmer water, greater salt and alkali concentrations and different food supplies. It is most interesting to note that similar fishes of the genus *Cyprinodon* are found in detached pools and streamlets of the interior of the Sahara which in the past also contained a large inland lake."

Jaeger, Dr. Edmund C. 1971. A Naturalist's Death Valley, Fourth Edition. p.28

Tecopa

Saturday, April 9th, the party unofficially broke up with Browns and Beaches heading for the Carrizo Plain and another outstanding display of flowers and baby owls nesting above their campsite! The rest of us explored the Tecopa Soil Pipe Caves.

Again, I was unable to find Tin Pan Cave, but Adit Cave and Amargosa Cave #1 were visited. Barb Maeso-Ruble found another small cave to the south that has yet to be officially named (Dan's Shirtless Cave, Phacelia Crawl, and B&D Cave are the leading suggestions). It is apparent that there are literally square miles of Ice Age lake sediment filled with soil pipe caves in this little desiccated basin. We also found the "Old PC Computer Dead SLR Camera Graveyard and Firepit" in an adjacent wash.

The Breaking of the Fellowship

That afternoon Frantz's left for home via Wildrose Canyon (where they looked longingly at the Wildrose Shelters in extreme Western Death Valley, but had no time to explore them) and Walker Pass while Dan and Martin blitzed back to Santa Cruz. We and Rubles drove to Bakersfield via Baker and were astounded to see how many playas held large shallow lakes.

We stopped in Bakersfield for dinner at the Wool Growers Restaurant at 19th and Baker Streets and ate ourselves silly. Eventually we continued home on Sunday, arriving late in the day as did Frantz's and Rubles. Beach's returned late Monday night, but we have no idea when Browns or Aalbu's arrived home . . . they could still be hiding in the blooming Golden Eyes on Jubilee Pass for all we know. . . films at 11. **BR**

SHEBAS SECRET CAVE

By Bighorn Broeckel

One cool Tuesday this June, Jim Wolff was able to shake loose and go caving. He still does some work in part-time archeology. It is always good to get out in the field with Jim. He can see things that you might never notice. Liz Wolff was having the church ladies over for tea and seemed only too happy to get rid of us for the day.

We headed for a Shasta County cave area and set out to match waypoints with cave names using Jim's GPS. The parking area is in a nondescript tangle of dirt tracks and roads. More than once, I have lost my car in this very spot, which brings up a good rule for GPS trips.

PRINCIPLE: FIRST OF ALL, GPS YOUR CAR

By the end of the day eleven caves were nailed down, some of them by two entrances. One was a newly discovered cave, and we still have to come up with a name for that one.

In the course of all this GPSing we managed to take a break, and surveyed one of the eleven caves, one that hadn't been mapped yet. So we let go of this GPS nonsense, donned hardhats, and actually went into a cave.

Shebas Secret

I first saw this cave in 1994 and dismissed it. All I saw was the east end. At that time, Barnum Cave was my prototype lava cave, and I was always looking for 1,000 feet of walking tube. Last year I had a chance to look in again, and my attitude was different. I was still just looking at the east end, but now I recognized at least 30 feet of passage and that this humble cave could be surveyed and added to the project. I was doing some surface survey that day with two Ethiopian boys, and we were applying Ethiopian names as a theme. That is when we came up with the name Shebas Secret, a fancy name for a 30 foot cave.

So the other day, Jim and I figured it would only take a couple shots. But just inside the 3 ft. entrance there was a little passage heading the opposite direction. I had forgotten about that. I plunked Wolff down on datum and headed in with the sharp end. It looked like 10 or 15 feet to reach the end. But that would add a bit of extra length and this cave needed some help.

Then, down at the end of the shot, we were surprised and delighted to find that the cave actually kept going in this direction. Over the top of a slab, greater space opened up!

PRINCIPLE: TO KNOW THAT IT DOESN'T GO, YOU HAVE TO STICK IN YOUR HEAD AND LOOK

OK, everybody already knows that one. Jim and I went on to discover a nice breakdown room 50 feet in length, 10 feet high, and 25 feet wide. Down through the breakdown, we found another little room. That was just gravy. The total length for the cave came to 139 feet. It turned out that Shebas Cave really did have some secrets, and this brings up a further principle.

PRINCIPLE: A FANCY NAME PRESSURES THE CAVE TO DO MORE

So now you know the Secret of Shebas Secret Cave. **BB**

Fig. 1 Caves of King Solomons Sequence listed by length in feet.

1. Overflow Cave	154
2. Shebas Secret Cave	139
3. Alice Cave	121
4. Conejo Cave	90
5. Wally Cave	52
6. Plastic Bag Cave	48
7. Ababa Bridge	42
8. Creepy Cave (est)	~30
9. Ethiopian Bridge	22

Other notes: Overflow Cave was included in the guidebook for the 1999 Western Regional in Shasta County. Alice Cave and Plastic Bag Cave were covered in the May-June 2003 SAG RAG.

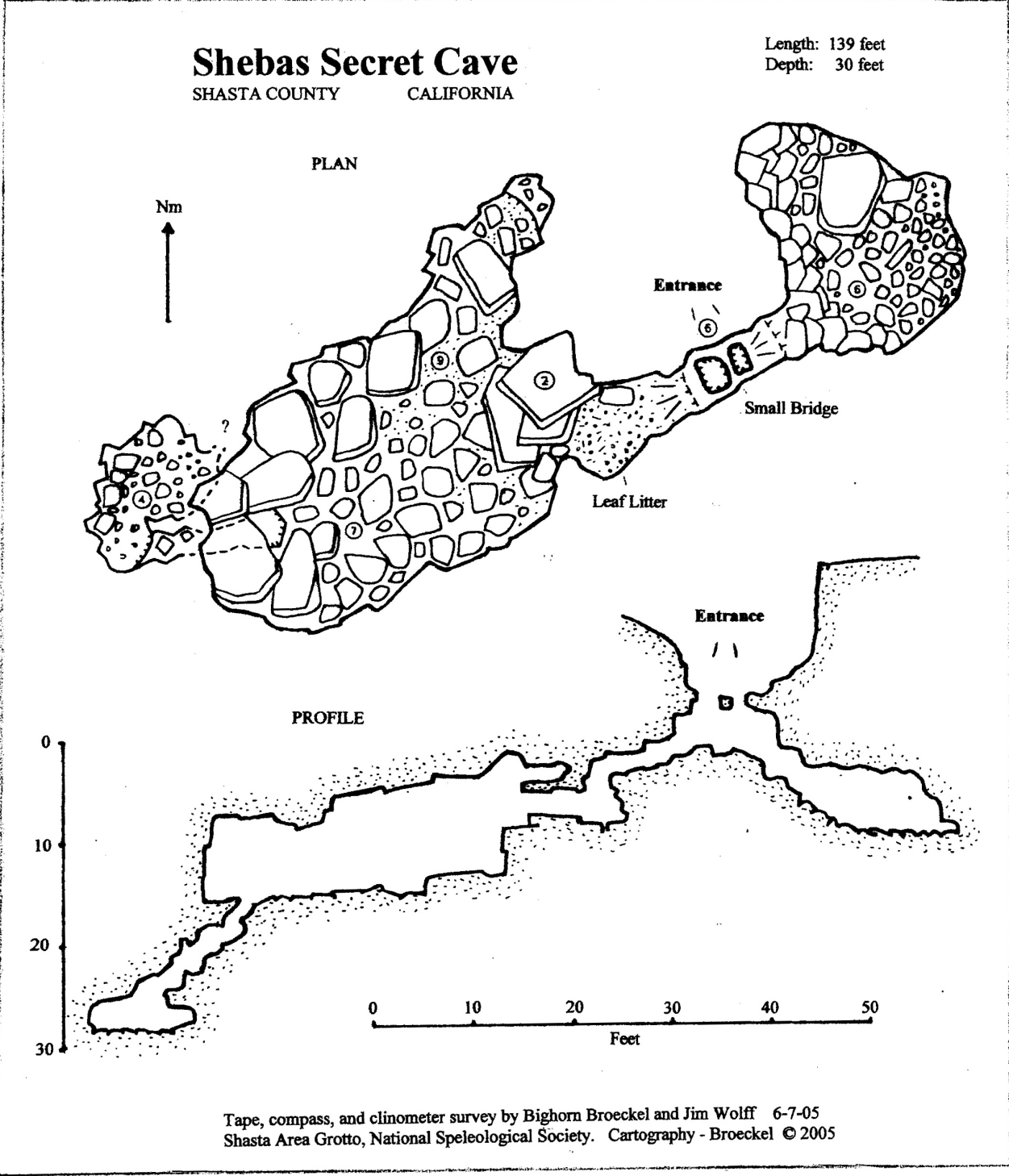


SAG RAG INCREASES CIRCULATION

Shebas Secret Cave

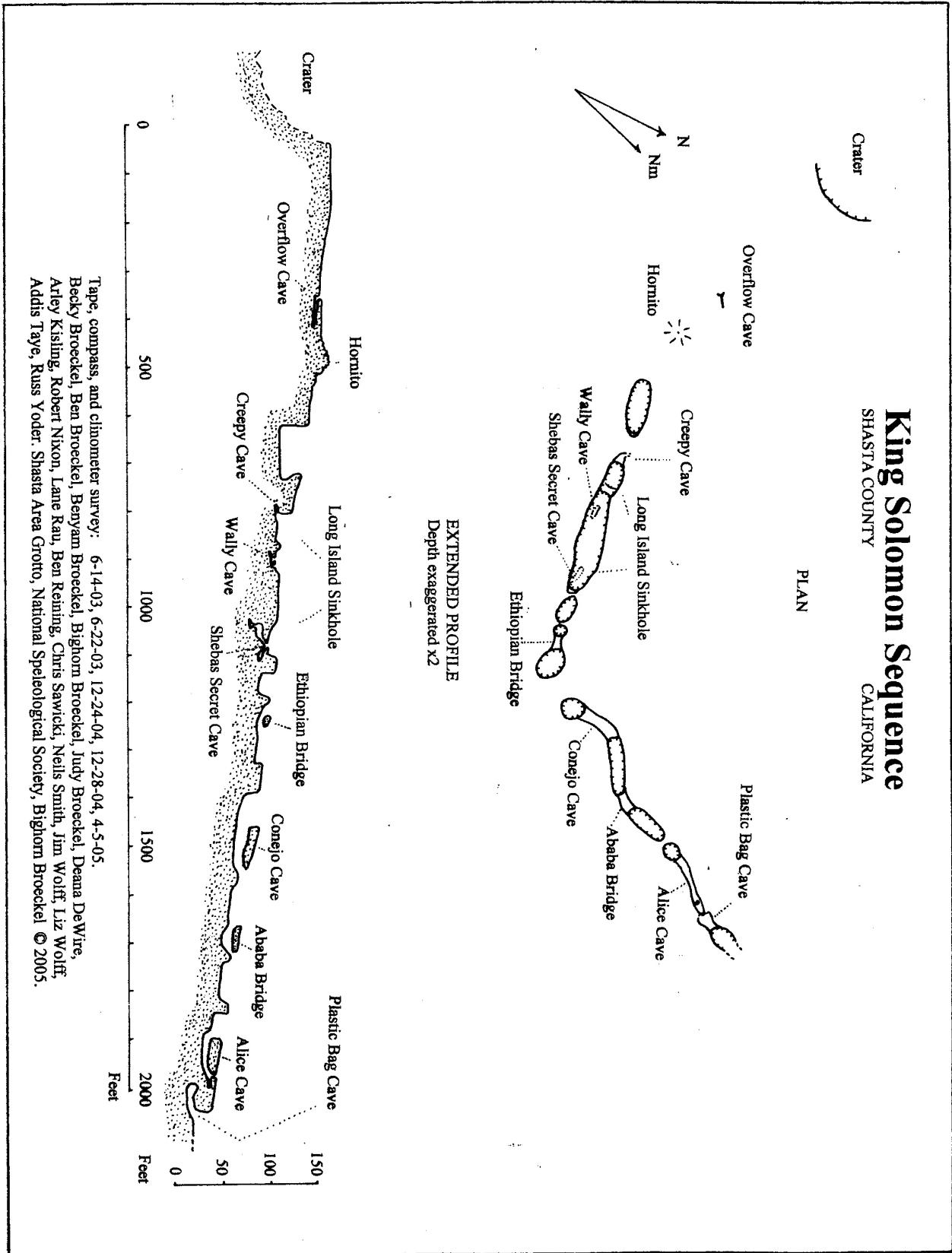
SHASTA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

Length: 139 feet
Depth: 30 feet



Tape, compass, and clinometer survey by Bighorn Broeckel and Jim Wolff 6-7-05
Shasta Area Grotto, National Speleological Society. Cartography - Broeckel © 2005

Map: Shebas Secret Cave



Map: King Solomon Sequence – Ababa Bridge, Alice Cave, Conejo Cave, Creepy Cave, Ethiopian Bridge, Long Island Sinkhole, Overflow Cave, Plastic Bag Cave, Shebas Secret Cave, Wally Cave

MOTH WINGS – WHAT DO THEY TELL US?

By Ray Miller

Most of us have seen patches of moth wings on the floors of caves, but what does this tell us about the activities of bats?

Often these patches of moth wings are attributed to feeding bats. This is a possibility, but it may not be true. Bats normally have a day roost where they feel reasonably safe during daylight hours. At night bats use a roost that is quite near their foraging area logically enough called a night roost. Here they dismember any prey that was hard to manage on the wing, socialize and rest. This roost need not be secure because the presence of bats is obscured by darkness. People have their porch or car peppered with bat guano, but they never see the night roosting bats. Bats that are tired or heavy with food will go no further than they must to night roost. If those wings you saw were deep in a cave and not very near an entrance, chances are it was not a night roost.

There are other possibilities for the congre-

gation of insect wings. Each species of animal has a specific environment they prefer to inhabit, and they will congregate where the temperature, humidity and habitat best suit their needs. Many of us have observed these congregations on the walls and ceilings of caves. The life span is very limited for winged insects, and the dying fall to the ground below these congregation points.

The wings of moths and other insects are normally dry with little or no nutritional value. The fallen bodies of these insects are eagerly sought for food by various scavengers, but usually the wings are discarded. The wings may last for years, however the moist body will decompose rapidly if not consumed.

Air flow within a cave can also concentrate insect wings. Eddies in moving air can cause objects to move to one place just as eddy currents in a stream can trap floating objects.

I am looking for positive evidence that wing concentrations are an indication of bat activity, but so far these data have been illusive. Can any reader add to my knowledge on this subject? **RM**

Dear Mr. Miller,

Thank you for doing the presentation.

I really liked it. My favorite part was the bunch of bats put together. I forget how many species of bats there were, but I think that I'll figure out.

I learned what bats look like what they eat where they live and other stuff. I think you're one of the best bat studiers ever.

Sincerely,

Danny.

But then, what do little kids know?



Jim Wolff at the upflow entrance to Alice Cave – June 7, 2005. Photo by Bighorn Broeckel.

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STAMP

<p>SAG RAG 2916 Deer Mdws Rd Yreka CA 96097</p>	
<p>TO:</p>	