sag rag

25:3 May-June 2006

This New Grotto in Siskiyou County is based in Yreka.

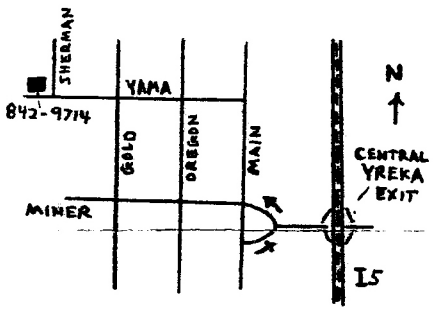
INSIDE: Shasta Area Grotto looks at some sea caves.

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>.

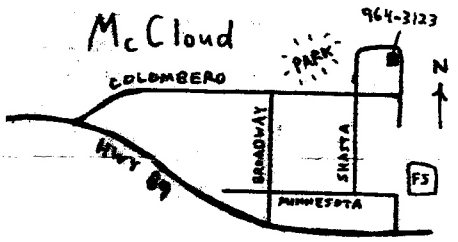
CAVERS CALENDAR 2006

July 1-4	KMCTF Speleocamp in Siskiyou County (530) 842-3917.
July 1-17	Russ Yoder & WVG explore big Northwest lava tubes (541) 890-0571.
July 3-8	International Symposium Vulcanospeleology, Tepoztlan, Mexico.
July 14	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Melanie Jackson's in Yreka (530) 842-9714. (Possibly meeting with National Forest regarding lava MOU.)
August 7-11	NSS Convention, Bellingham, Washington.
August 18	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolff's in McCloud (530) 964-3123.
Sept. 2-4	Western Regional, Dos Picos Park, San Diego (619) 561-3815.

MAPS TO THE MEETINGS



JULY – YREKA



AUGUST - McCLOUD

SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

This unusual RAG hits the beach with some sea cave reports from the coast of California. The Mendocino caves shown here can be easily explored at low tide, and your tennis shoes might not even get wet. Based on these Mendocino County experiences, I hereby declare myself executive director of the cave project looking at the inter-tidal caves of Siskiyou County. Bruce Rogers adds another sea cave report from further south, San Mateo County. Note that their trip to Año Nuevo was not long after New Years Day. Bruce Rogers gets in on cool stuff like that.

Instead of meeting notes, we have reports from two recent meeting-less cave camps, from May and June, in Josephine and Shasta Counties respectively. Maybe the new Seafood Grotto in Yreka will serve up fishier meetings, but at least SAG is doing some camping and lurking. What is this "delurking"? **BB**

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SHASTA AREA GROTTO

The Shasta Area Grotto is a conservation minded organization devoted to the protection and study of caves and their contents.

CAMPING AND KARST-WALKING IN SOUTHERN OREGON By Jim Wolff

It all started out as a grotto meeting/campout/cave dig, then it got changed to just a camping and ridge-walking weekend, but that's OK, we were in some beautiful country too, only it was a little steep for this (older) over-weight, outta-shape writer... !! Bill Kenney went up to the area a few weeks before and noted a few things he needed to take care of on the road there, and the snow level status. Kenney organized the weekend, and provided his brother's huge canvas wall tent and wood stove. I met Bill at his house on Friday, helped him get the picnic table in his truck, and off we went, stopping only for me and fuel for our trucks along the way.

Our first stop was at the "ron-de-voo" point, where we were to meet Russ Yoder. He wasn't there. So we were off for the camp, only to be stopped short of our goal by downed trees. But Bill, having been forewarned, brought his chainsaw. With a few logs pulled aside and some branches kicked away, we were free to go. At the cat road that leads to camp, we had to do more altering of the natural scheme of things, by cutting a hole through all sides of the road, and the overhead, a green tunnel. Now at the end of the road for the day, was the tent site – which needed more hard work removing logs and gardening with (what else?) a garden hoe. Setting up the tent was fast, with Kenney having put it up many times in the past for SAG events.

After setting up the tent, Kenney offered to show me the two little mini caves that he and others checked a few years ago. At the upper cave, I got a good GPS fix on it, surprising, because of the old growth Doug Fir forest, we almost had a closed canopy. Crossing the creek to get to the caves was easy at that point, but problematic elsewhere up the canyon, as we were to find out later...! And BOY, was having that tent and stove there GREAT! No cold breeze in this tent, no sir! The tent was located in a narrow canyon, just 500 feet or so below present snowline, so you know that it can get nice and cool at night. Our canvas shelter was VERY Warm and comfortable. We had a table to cook and eat on, hot water was always on the woodstove, and lots of food and plenty of things to talk about! It was WAY too comfortable, but our first arrival, Russ Yoder, brought us out of the tent. And then, after lunch, Shakina, Reba and their two dogs showed up. Mark Harder, who was supposed to be arriving at 2 a.m. (estimated to arrive VERY early Saturday morning), would make up the whole camp.

Saturday, I was up late, 8 o'clock LATE! Sorry, but I had to have breakfast, besides it looked like we were all on the same schedule, plus, Yoder was off karst-walking already (and, I hadn't even finished my coffee yet!), and Mark wasn't here yet, so it was a go, once we are done and packed up for a trek. So we headed up the canyon. Part of the way, we passed by some nice cave openings – on the OPPOSITE side of the canyon, of course! Popping over a rise, we sighted a limestone outcrop that Bill said hadn't been checked before. So, since we were on our way up the canyon anyway, we scrambled all over the rocks, looking for openings. We found a little resurgence, a few inches above the flow of the side creek. Bill thought it must be pirated water, since it didn't seem to be any colder than the creek, nor was there any cold air flowing out of there. Didn't look promising, so I didn't GPS it.

Farther up the main creek, we had to cross, in order to get to our objective for the day, but there wasn't any clear way, except a log 25-30 feet over the creek...! I looked at other possible ways, but none looked more straightforward ... , and wicked! Kenney chose to sit astraddle the log, and inch across, and Shakina and the dogs just scampered across like it was a highway! Me, I was shaking in my boots, and chose to stay behind and wait while my companions went on ahead, to find the cave. So, after about an hour, they returned, with news that they didn't find the cave. Oh well, some days chickens, some days just feathers...! Back at camp, after a little while, Mark showed up! A little late! Oh well, there's always Sunday!

Sunday, we weren't up fast enough for Yoder, who chose to leave rather than stay, and head over to Modoc County, to a lava cave area there. That proved pivotal, since Shakina, Reba, Bill and I were going home that day too...! Mark was left to fend for himself. We broke camp, and headed for home, after spending a nice weekend with friends. **JW**

Bill Kenney at the entrance to upper cave of the two small caves
near the May SAG camp-out in Josephine County.

CAVE CAMP IN SOUTHERN OREGON (e-version) By Harder, Kenney, and Wolff

"Darn all those people up the creek" JD

Over the weekend of 12th-14th of May, there was a ridgewalk/campout in Josephine County, OR. We took latitude and longitude coordinates for the upper of the two caves you guys looked at a few years ago. You will recognize which cave I'm talking about when you see the photos. We took a good fix with a remarkable arrangement of satellites, giving less than 30 ft accuracy. That is real good in an old growth forest, with near closed canopy overhead, in a narrow canyon. **JW**

Those in attendance were with the SAG – Bill Kenney, Jim Wolff, Reba, Shakina Drew, and Russ Yoder. Since we were all car-camping just off the road at the creek crossing, Bill brought his big canvas camp tent complete with woodstove and picnic table. I was once again amazed at the remoteness of the Siskiyous – in the day and a half I was there, I heard not one car on that road. I arrived on Saturday afternoon and all but Reba were out scouting the canyon and heights above.

I believe there were two groups; Russ made a group of one, and the rest, except for Reba who stayed in camp, returned together. Russ happened upon a cave that sounded like Windy and reached the boundary trail up on the pass. The others spent their time scouting various marble exposures in the canyon and found some caves. Since the "goal" of the trip was to find Windy and to relocate the airflow site inside, I'd say we were only a little successful.

I was pretty bushed from staying up late the night before and driving, so I didn't get out that day. We had other hikes planned for the next morning, but before I could finish my oats, everyone decided they wanted to head home instead; so I helped Bill and Jim dismantle the tent and said goodbye to all.

The next morning, I had my oats again (gotta have a good breakfast), scalding my left foot with boiling water in the process. Much as I hate to admit it, one of Steve Knutson's warnings came true again. This one concerns the little stoves like my MSR Pocket-Rocket that perch on top of the butane canister: they are prone to tipping and therefore dangerous.

Later, I took an hour-and-a-half hike up the creek. There's no trail, and I didn't get as high as the marble. There are several places where one must either climb high or cross the stream to pass steep canyon wall that reaches the creek, and the high route is incised with side canyons that force still more detours. Everyone commented on the difficulty of the bushwhacking.

On the drive back, I checked out a trail in lower elevations beneath two high peaks. There is what looks like a large cluster of cold springs that almost contour around one peak and north to the other. All but a few are at the same elevation, quite a striking trend on the map. I don't have any idea what the geology is up there. Could they be resurging from a marble contact up that high? I'd like to get back to both places to check them out, but I'd need more than a 3 day weekend to do them justice. **MH**

Time to "delurk" I guess. Mark had never been there before, so he knows nothing about the large culvert about ¼ mile up the road that had been washed out in 1996 or 1997. Anyway, it has been repaired and we camped right at the creek. Jim Wolff and I cut and removed about 5 large windfall trees from across the other road on the way in, but watch out for the rock slides which we didn't bother to remove; could break a tire if traveling too fast. I remember Tom Kline from the mapping trip to Windy, still have a copy of the map. **BK**

Uh yeah, the rock slides, yeah. Best I remember, one of them rocks come down and hit me upside the head. Forgot to mention them. Course you could always get out of your vehicles and move them rocks like Kenney and Wolff done with them trees. I figured it was just too much work, or maybe when I got outta my car, that's when I got hit. Can't be sure. I suggest you talk with Russ. Yo Russ! What do you remember? Won't nobody enlighten us about them cold springs? No matter. I believe that no news is good news in this case, since now I have something to look forward to the next time I visit. **MH**

SAG CAMPOUT JUNE 2006 – SHASTA COUNTY LAVA CAVES By Bighorn Broeckel

Neils Smith and his daughter Elaine had our campsite established for the weekend of June 9-11, 2006. I called our National Forest contact very late this year, so Neils, Elaine, and another caver Dave Smith (not related to Neils and Elaine) did the expedient thing and simply paid for the camp sites. It was a good thing too, because the campground "host" was pretty aggressive about the rules of the camp. We put up a few of Wolff's ''NSS'' signs, and I was anxious to get out of there and get on with the caving.

Dave Smith was ready, so we headed out and got to the area right at dusk. In order to locate Shirt Tail Cave, we opted to go through the good side of Red Shirt Cave. This pops out on the surface exactly 12 feet from the main entrance to Shirt Tail Cave. This was survey trip #2 for Shirt Tail, and we were able to pick right up and added 214 feet to the little maze of crawlways. Both sides of the maze ended at roughly the same time, so we were able to finish the cave before midnight.

In the morning we all lounged around camp waiting to see if there were any more cavers for the weekend. It looked like we were it, so Dave and I set out once again. This time our objective was Mad Hatter and with optimism we continued the survey downhill. Soon we lost the airflow in crawlways. 116 feet of survey was added to the cave bringing the total to about 1600 feet. Both the upper and the lower limits of the cave have now been established. Intermediate leads remain, but these tend to be low and difficult, so I doubt that this cave will reach 2000 feet.

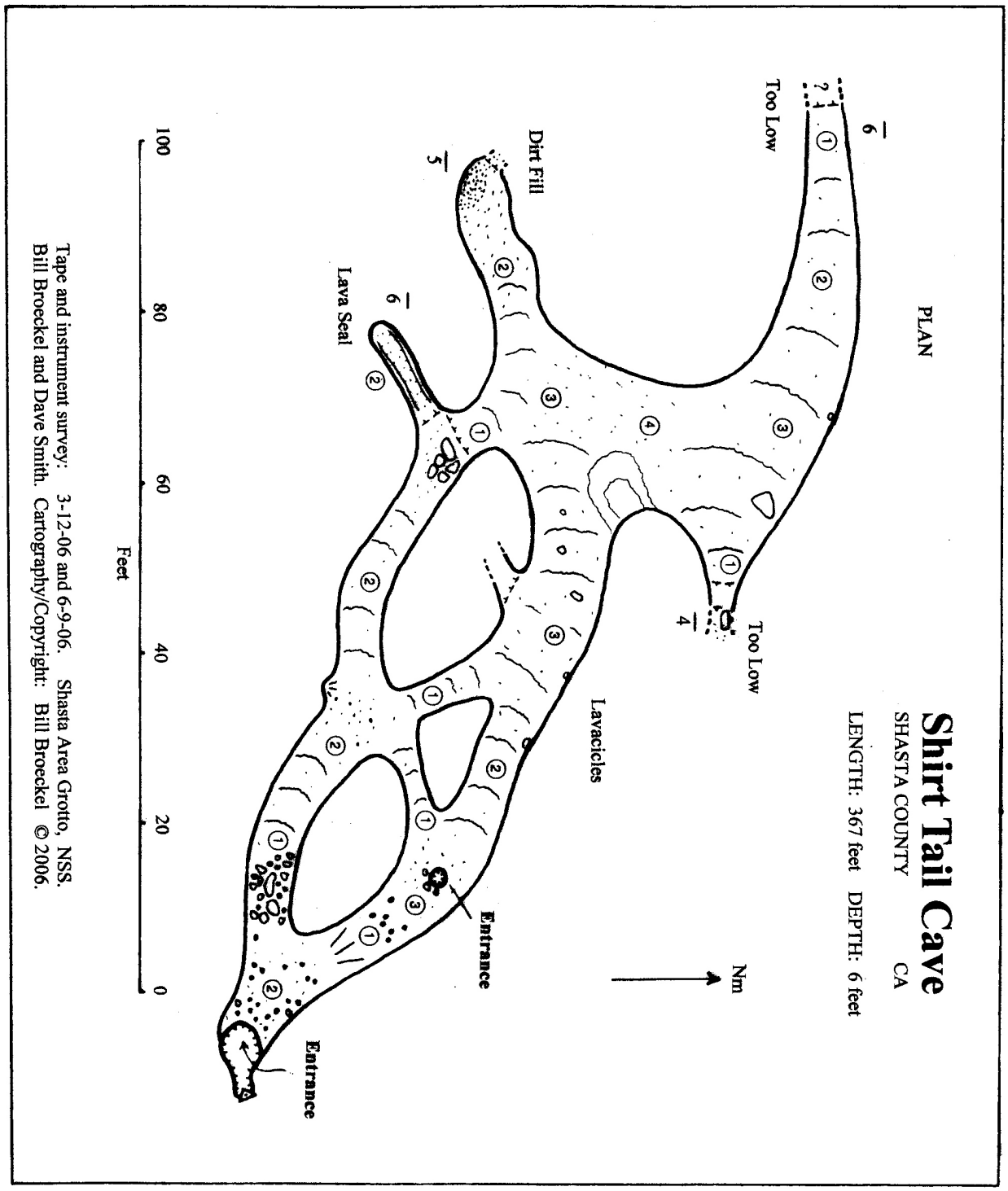
We were tired of "low and difficult" already, so we did some lava walking and found three more small caves. We also found a big cave, one I think Russ Yoder looked at last year. The rest of our time was taken up in the survey of this cave. The cave was just about completed and will be about 500 feet long. Total survey distance for the weekend was 804 feet. The grotto cave survey project in this area was started about 20 years ago. The number of mapped caves now reaches 123, and total passage distance is over 33,000 feet. The 804 feet from this weekend campout pushed the project total past the 10 kilometer mark.

Some time still remained, so we went back to camp. Dave had never seen Subway Cave, so Neils, Elaine, and I took him on a guided caver tour of the Subway tunnel. This is the closest thing to a 1,000 meter cave we know of in this area, and the passage dimensions impress me every time I go in, especially compared with some of the other nearby caves. Now Dave was ready to head home, but I stayed to have supper with Neils and Elaine. I went home later, quite happy that the tradition of this June campout is still alive. Every year it provides a good shot in the arm for the cave mapping project. **BB**

SHIRT TAIL CAVE By Bighorn Broeckel

Last December, Liz Wolff and I gave this hole a second look and decided it was a cave. Hoping for at least 30 feet, I returned on a frozen day in March. Both leads off the entrance went through one foot high passages that led into a maze of crawlways. The other entrance is a manhole in the ceiling that surfaces underneath a tangle of underbrush. It would be possible to go through it, but we haven't actually used it. On the second survey trip (June 9), Dave Smith and I found a nice room 4 feet high near the back of the maze. A lead doubling back on the right with air movement is a connection point with the bad side of Red Shirt Cave*. The connection point is too low to get through, but if some petite person could do it, Red Shirt and Shirt Tail would be one cave with a passage length of 958 feet. Shirt Tail has 367 feet, with some pretty patches of lavacicles and little lava stalagmites. With the small caliber tubes configured in a maze with many original surfaces, Shirt Tail easily qualifies as another CLC (cute little cave) for Shasta County. **BB**

* For more on Red Shirt, including map, see SAG RAG 22:4, July-Aug 2003.



Map: Shirt Tail Cave

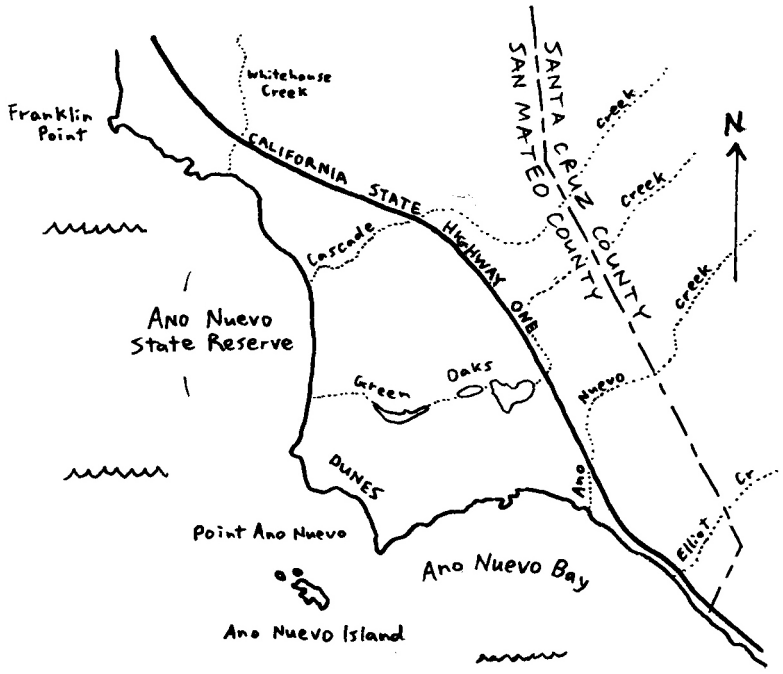
SEA CAVES AT AÑO NUEVO STATE RESERVE, SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

By Bruce Rogers

On Sunday, Jan. 10th, Pat Helton and Bruce Rogers visited Año Nuevo* State Reserve about an hour's drive south of San Francisco. With a marginal low tide that was rising smartly, they explored, photographed, and mapped about a dozen small sea caves. "Your Fault Cave" did not have the pressurized water fountains spurting from the exposed faults as were observed by Gale Beach in 2003, but the walls were covered with cascading sheets of water

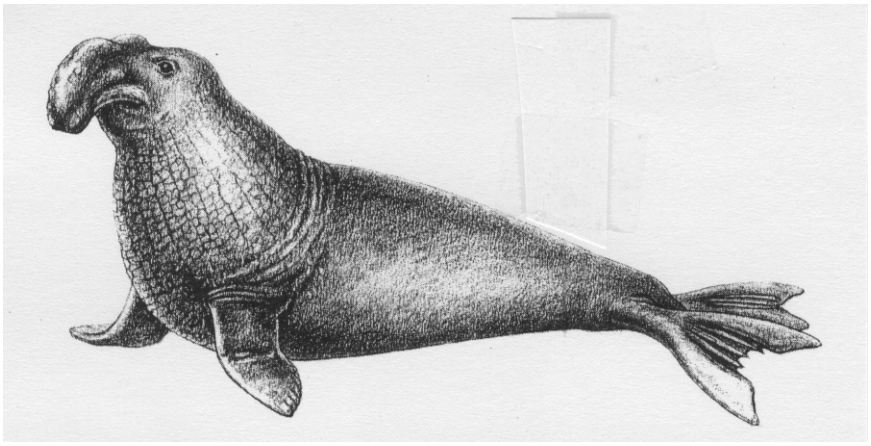
About 30 feet further east, a new sea cave – as yet unnamed – had formed over the last 12 months – talk about soft, easily eroded rock and fast sea cave development! Much of the surrounding sea cliff had collapsed over the winter and a few traces of nearby Año Nuevo Cave were visible across the narrow bay – it, too, may have collapsed, but park rules forbid entry to that area of the Reserve since it backs the hauling out beach for the resident population of elephant seals. **BR**

* For more on Año Nuevo, see Bosted, Peter, SFBC Newsletter 27:9, September 1984. Also, Sea Cave Inventory, San Mateo Coast District ... Rogers, Legge, 1988. Report for California Department of Parks and Recreation.



REPRINTED from Daugherty, Anita 1979. Marine Mammals of California. Published cooperatively by the University of California Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program and the California Department of Fish and Game, pp.44-45.

NORTHERN ELEPHANT SEAL
Mirounga angustirostris



This is the largest of all the seals, the males reaching lengths of 15-16 feet (an unverified report gives 22 feet) and weights of about 4,000 to 5,000 pounds, and females 11 feet and about 1,700 pounds. The color is brownish in old pelage, silver-gray in new. It is not a handsome animal: there are often patches of skin peeling off; and the male develops a bulbous enlargement of the snout, from which, along with its size, it gets its common name. Those who have been fortunate enough to see elephant seals on their rookeries or hauling out grounds have found them quite fascinating. They can be approached closely, usually neither fleeing nor attacking unless unduly disturbed.

The range of the species is from Alaska (Prince of Wales Island) to Baja California, Mexico (Cape San Lazaro). Elephant seals were formerly abundant as far north as Point Reyes, above San Francisco, but were hunted so extensively for their fine quality oil that they were nearly exterminated. Their last refuge was Guadalupe Island, off northern Baja California. In 1892 scientists found only nine on the island, and took seven of these for specimens. Fortunately, there must have been others which they did not see. In 1911 the Mexican government prohibited killing them, and the herd began building up until by 1930 there were about 500 on Guadalupe, and there were believed to be over 1,500 altogether. In 1938, 13 were counted on San Miguel, one of the southern California Channel Islands. In 1950 there were estimated to be 4,500-5,000 on Guadalupe Island and smaller colonies on other Mexican islands and on the Channel Islands; a count was made in that year of 168 on San Nicolas Island. By 1978 there were breeding colonies on San Nicolas, San Miguel, Santa Barbara, Año Nuevo, and Southeast Farallon Islands, and a small breeding colony had started up on the mainland at Año Nuevo Point. Individual animals have been seen as far north as Alaska on several occasions. A Department of Fish and Game census in 1978 revealed 5,600 elephant seals on San Miguel Island alone; however, this is at odds with National Marine Fisheries Service estimates of 10,000 for this island. In any event, the species has reoccupied all of its historic rookeries and hauling-out grounds, and recent estimates place the total population of northern elephant seals at 50,000 animals.

TWO MENDOCINO COUNTY SEA CAVES By Bighorn Broeckel

A couple years ago, I was a parent on a multi-day school field trip based at the Mendocino Biological Field Station in Mendocino County. One of the subjects was Marine Biology, so we had some chances to visit the shore. First there was the evening we had a sundown beach party. A big river came out here, and driftwood was scattered over a wide expanse of sand. We built a nice fire. Some of us wandered over to the north end of the beach where some cliffs extended out into the ocean. We were able to get around the first little finger of rock, and we were surprised to find a large cave entrance. The entrance was completely hidden from the beach, but it was easy to climb over the finger of rock or run around the front of the rocks between waves. The floor of the cave was sandy, and we could walk right in. The tide was out, and it was nice to look out through the entrance and see the sunset.

Well, I just-happened to have my cave survey gear, which I carry with me at all times just in case a cave shows up like this. So I attached the school principal's wife to the end of the survey tape, and took the single shot needed to map this cave. The cave was a 42 foot long walking passage with a slight duckunder near the entrance. A large driftwood log was half buried in the sand along the right side. The entrance was 9 feet tall and 19 feet wide, and daylight penetrated all the way to the back wall of the cave. The north wall had a few ordinary barnacles.

The rock here is a greywacke or mudstone, which is common in the Franciscan Formation and often seen in outcrops along the coast. The rock is gray in color, and has lines of white shot through it so that at first glance, it looks like it might be covered with threads, fishing nets, or spider webs. Apparently these mudstones are laid on the floors of deep sea trenches, undergo metamorphic processes, and then become uplifted by tectonic forces. In the course of all this, the rock is often twisted, folded, or tilted at wicked angles, and faults seem to be a common theme. Pounding surf attacks exposed or weakened seams to differentially erode rock and form caves.

The next morning we were up early to hit the tide pools and take advantage of a minus tide. We scrambled down a cliff on a rocky coast, and I couldn't help but notice that there were caves everywhere. Out in the water, seals were happily swimming in and out of a small hole in the cliff. I was jealous of those seals, but stuck with the human Marine Biology class. We walked right by several perfectly good looking cave entrances. Eventually, the class itself actually entered a huge cave passage. There were large and beautiful light-deprived tide pools in there, completely devoid of photosynthetic seaweed. They were encrusted with pink coralline algae, sporting occasional sponges and grazing nudibranches! The cave extended back into a dark zone.

Well, I just happened to have a handy electric light mounted on a helmet, and my back-up lights, all of which I always carry with me at all times, just in case something like this happens. So I went caving. I returned in time to see our Marine Biology teacher ducking through a small hole across the way. I followed him into another big tide pool cave room much like the first one. This one also had a huge entrance overlooking the waters of the next cove. On the other side of this water-filled inlet, another cave entrance could be seen along the same trend as the first two, but sadly, inaccessible without some brave swimming.

At this point, some of the students were beginning to drift back in the direction we started from, beginning to lose interest perhaps. I was beside myself. This cave <u>had</u> to be surveyed. Luckily, an experienced cave surveyor was nearby (school principal's wife) and we opted for a quick survey. The whole thing was done with five shots in about 15-20 minutes. It seemed like two caves, but due to a generous overhang in the soaring sea cliffs, the two are connected into one cave, 222 feet long. The teacher told us that he used to crawl through a small hole to get into the second tide pool chamber. Now it is more like a small doorway four feet high. I guess these sea caves can evolve quickly. The rock looked similar to Sanctuary Cave. We named this one Hitchhiker due to the sketch, which came out looking like an extended arm with the thumb up. **BB**

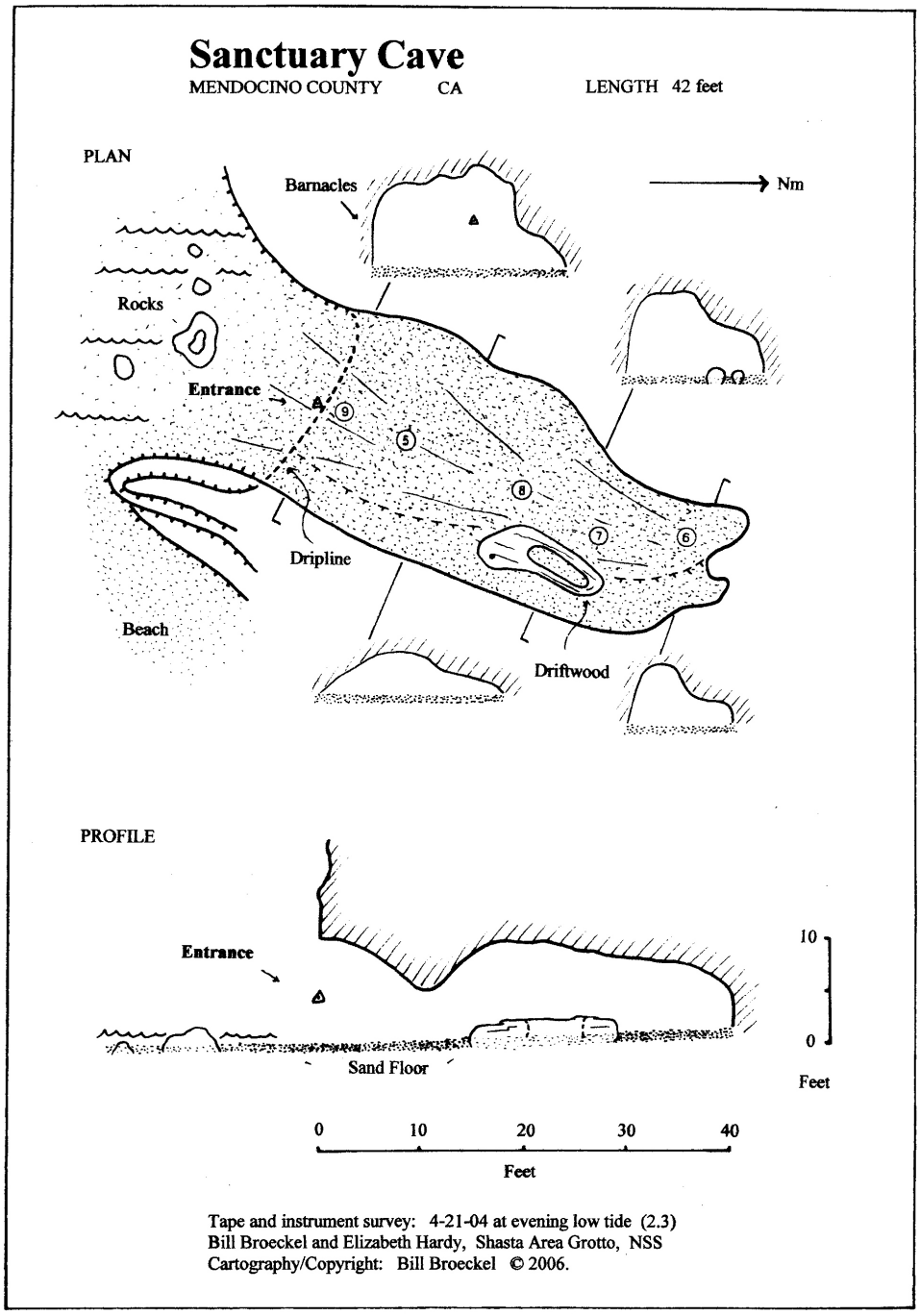
For more on Mendocino sea caves see:

Rogers, Bruce 1984. From my Secret Cave File: Mendocino Sea Caves. Short Rounds, June, 1984, pp.7-9.

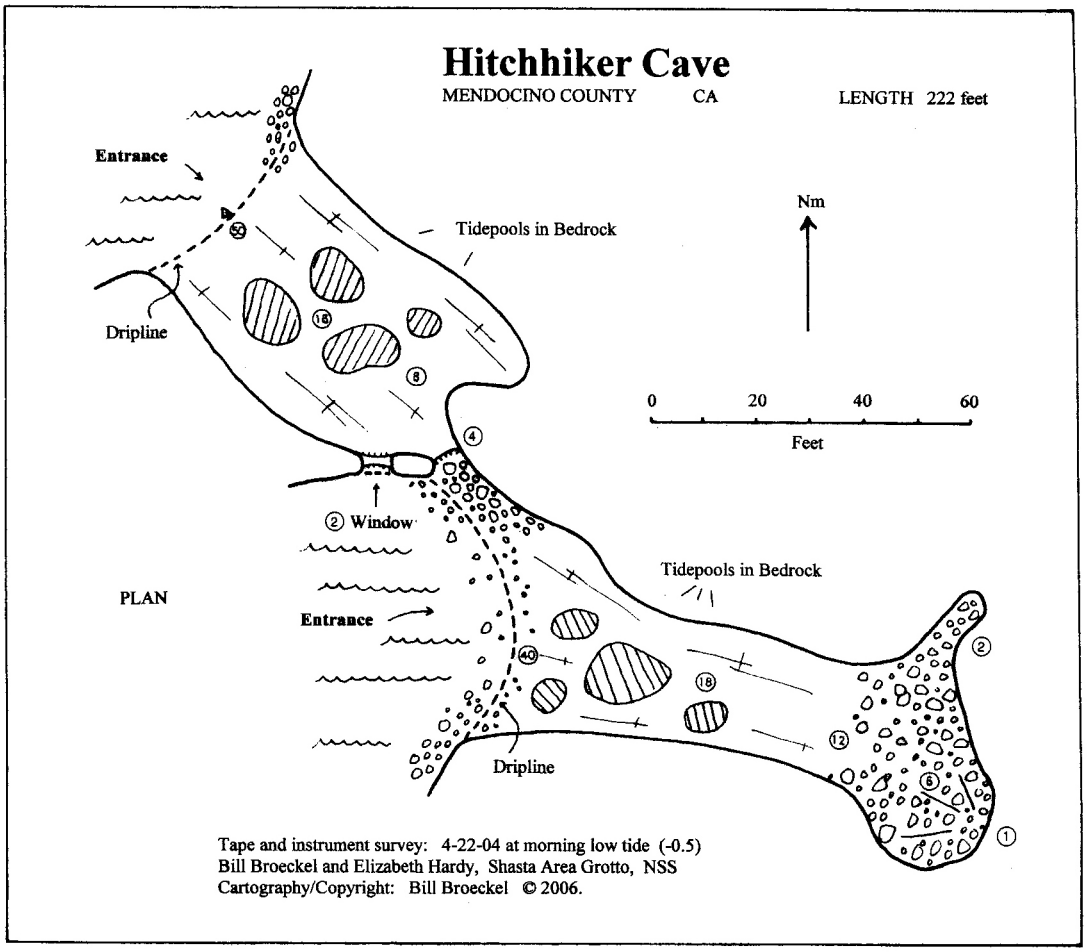
Mele, Gary 1984. Starfish Sea Cave. SFBC Newsletter 27:9, September 1984, pp.8-10.

Leissring, Matt 2003. Where is Pretty Pain Cave? Our Sea Cave Weekend. Valley Caver 41:4, Winter 2003, pp. 1-4.

Baumann, Kip 2003. Mendocino Sea Cave Kayaking. Valley Caver 41:4, Winter 2003, pp.4-5.



Map: Sanctuary Cave



Map: Hitchhiker Cave

SAG RAG
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