



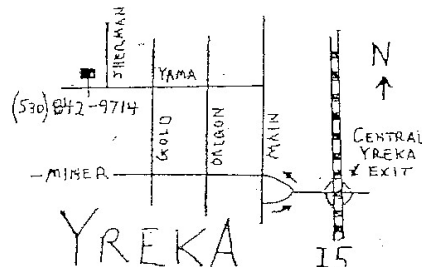
Bravo Savanna Kennedy – Hercules of Lava Beds Award

**INSIDE – REGULAR GROTTTO STUFF
WESTERN REGIONAL 2010 WRAP-UP**

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at different locations on 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 <caverbill@live.com>. For more on SAG, check the web site at <<http://www.caves.org/grotto/sag>>.

CAVERS CALENDAR 2011

Jan 26 SAG meets at Melanie's 7:30 pm
Yreka 530 842-9714
July 18-22, 2011 2011 NSS Convention in
Glenwood Springs, Colorado



SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

SAG RAGs are catching up, now only one behind. Resubscribe if you dare, always an act of faith. The form is on the back. It is also time to vote for grotto officers again (see below). This Sept-Oct issue features material from ... September and October. Thank-you to Virginia Bobrow for acting as stand-in secretary and bringing us notes from the September meeting. Chris Kennedy fills us in on some of the interesting grotto caving done that weekend, care of legendary north-state caver Roger Jones. Liz Wolff thanks everybody for helping with the Regional at Lava Beds in October. Then, Chris Kennedy's 10-yr old daughter Savanna recounts her experiences completing the Hercules Challenge, the so-called Twelve Labors of the Loop (these are listed out, so her article makes more sense). Every issue of SAG RAG tries to latch onto a cave map somehow. Burnt Elderberry was mostly mapped last September. Maybe this issue was waiting for this cave to get finished in December, it just wanted this map so bad. You never know. Burnt Elderberry, discovered, mapped, and published in less than a year, is a rare example of a Broeckel cave worked up in a timely manner. My 2011 resolution is to do less caving. However, I hardly ever keep my resolutions. Don't forget to renew and don't forget to vote (for me). Love you guys. **BB**

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS: If you get a voting card, fill it out, and drop it in the mail soon.

Nominations:	Chair:	Liz Wolff or Melanie Jackson
	Vice Chair:	Sam Baxter
	Treasurer:	Steve Hobson
	Secretary:	Melanie Jackson or FAA (fill-in as available)
	Editor:	Bill Broeckel
	Webmeister:	Dave Smith

SAG MEETING MINUTES September 24, 2010

September 24, 2010 Shasta Area Grotto meeting at the home of Vern and Linda Cliff in Big Bar, California. Present were Vern and Linda Cliff, Virginia Bobrow, Jim and Liz Wolff, Dave Smith, Steve Hobson, Chris Kennedy, Rudi Hendricks, Kevin Citta, Eric Gador, and Roger Jones. The meeting was called to order at 8:42pm when everyone showed up from the day's cave hunting trip. Introductions and "life stories". Membership forms were handed out to the prospective members, and regional registration forms were given to all present who had not registered or gotten forms. Talk about the progress of the regional (food, t-shirts, etc.).

Trip Reports: Speleocamp (Roger Jones) over Labor Day; a biologist from UC Davis in Bigfoot to collect specimens; a karst survey netted 22 stations. Kevin went to Subway near Hat Creek, Jot Dean on Medicine Lake Highlands, Lava Beds, and Veil Falls and Parrot Placer Grotto in the Frank Church Wilderness. Chris and Jed to Manzanita Ridge Cave and found two entrances. Liz and Jim Wolff went to GPS entrances and relocate caves on Siskiyou County lava flows.

Meeting adjourned 9:30pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Virginia Bobrow.

VB

Sharing the Wealth in Trinity County By Chris Kennedy

My first trip out with the SAG group was almost an overwhelming experience. Being fairly new to caving I had heard from others and read online that joining a grotto was an integral part of becoming a more accomplished caver, so a little over a month ago I joined SAG and attended my first meeting. This past Saturday I joined them for my first outing, which turned out to be a day of ridgewalking to mark the GPS coordinates of several caves that Roger Jones had discovered years ago, as well as search for new entrances or undiscovered caves in their near vicinities. The day started with a hearty breakfast at the home of Vern and Linda Clift, which turned out fantastic despite the local power outage. The group mingled sharing conversations of previous cave trips while consuming vast quantities of caffeine. It was hours later in the day when I realized how important that energy rich morning was.

The group that left the house that morning was an even split of cave veterans and newbies. The veteran group, led by Roger Jones, included Jim Wolff, Dave Smith and Vern Clift. The newcomers were Rudi Hendricks, Eric Gador, Kevin Citta and myself. We newcomers were excited with the prospect that by the end of the day we would know of two more caves to explore, Dungeon Cave and Banana Cave.

Our first stop was going to be the Dungeon Cave up a mountain road. We overlooked the spot on the way in and wound up at a popular climbing area known to Roger as Prince's Rock. We decided since we were there it would be worth doing a short exploration to see if we could find any possible entrances. We searched for about an hour during which Rudi found an opening that he was able to move several body lengths into and then we decided it was time to move on back down to the Dungeon area. We left behind a fantastic set of formations, and a large promising area that deserves a longer, more thorough search for possible cave entrances.

On the way back down the road we easily spotted our parking place and from there began the trek to find and get GPS coordinates for Dungeon Cave. To Roger's surprise, and the relief of the rest of the group, we fairly easily found the first entrance that Roger had located many years ago. From there the group broke out to find alternate entrances to the cave. While walking a steep area on the far side of the rock, I spotted a small hole visible under a moss covered rock and called to the group that I had found the other entrance. Dave informed me that I must have found a new entrance because the others had already found the other known entrance. I began feeling that maybe I could be a true caver; I had just made my first contribution to the group. I moved about ten feet down the hole to see if it went anywhere and much to my chagrin it had a passage that continued even deeper. It continued down a vertical drop and we had no vertical equipment with us, so Jim marked the coordinates and we decided it had to wait for another day to explore further. We marked the other entrance coordinates and hiked back to the cars ready to move to the second site, Banana Cave.

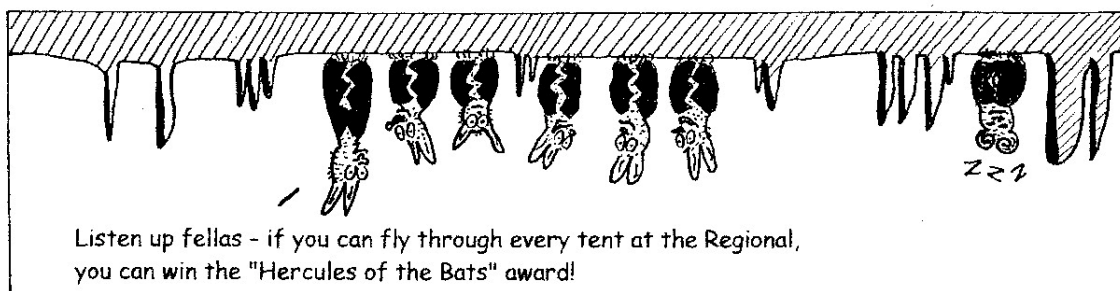
The hike to Banana Cave was up a steep ridgeback and it was a little over a quarter mile before we even reached any rock outcroppings. Listening to the conversations of the seasoned members during the walk, I gathered that on occasion these cave search outings could turn into wild goose chases, but this one turned out to be a gold mine of caving possibilities. While Roger and the rest of the group started exploring the right side of the ridge for the entrance to Banana Cave, Rudi and I started searching the left side for new leads. Our search quickly started paying off when Rudi called to me saying that he had found something. I joined him at the twin-sized hole he had found. It ended about a body length in, but we did find a two-inch gap in the back that had an air current. Knowing that the plan for the day was more about locating caves than digging them out we continued searching for more openings. Within a couple of minutes Rudi had spotted three more possibilities. He started with the one to the far left, which turned out to only be a depressed area in the rock, but the other two turned out to be small caves. The first was a two-foot in diameter flow hole that elbowed about fifteen feet in and went for about another fifteen feet before it became too small to continue further. Since Rudi was leading I got to watch him pull some wild cave yoga in order to change direction to come back out. I decided to just back out feet first. The other cave opened up into a small room about fifteen feet past the entrance where there were some nice cauliflower formations and then we worked our way ten feet up a blocky chimney to see if it went anywhere from there. That was the end of it, but the whiteness of the rock in the cave was definitely worth seeing.

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Upon leaving that cave, we climbed over to the other side and hooked back up with the group. We found six more entrances on the right side of the ridge, but decided to come back later to map them when we were fresh and had more time. As we were exploring the area we noticed that there were climbing bolts in many areas on the rock, and I figured that climbers must be aware that there were caves there. We began looking for short cuts down the ridge to the cars, but because of the steep grade we decided on going back along the top of the ridge the same way we had come. To end the day we drove back and exchanged numbers among the group. Us newcomers thanked the long time cavers for sharing their knowledge with us during the day and they thanked us for joining the group and tasked us with returning to map the areas and bring back more information for the grotto and caving community. When I got home from the day I was exhausted, exhilarated, and curious about the caves we had found. I look forward to getting back out there and exploring, so that next time we meet I can give back to the group that gave me so much on my first outing with the SAG Grotto. **CK**

BAT JOKES

Bighorn Bill



The Rocking Chair Creaks – Than-Q Note

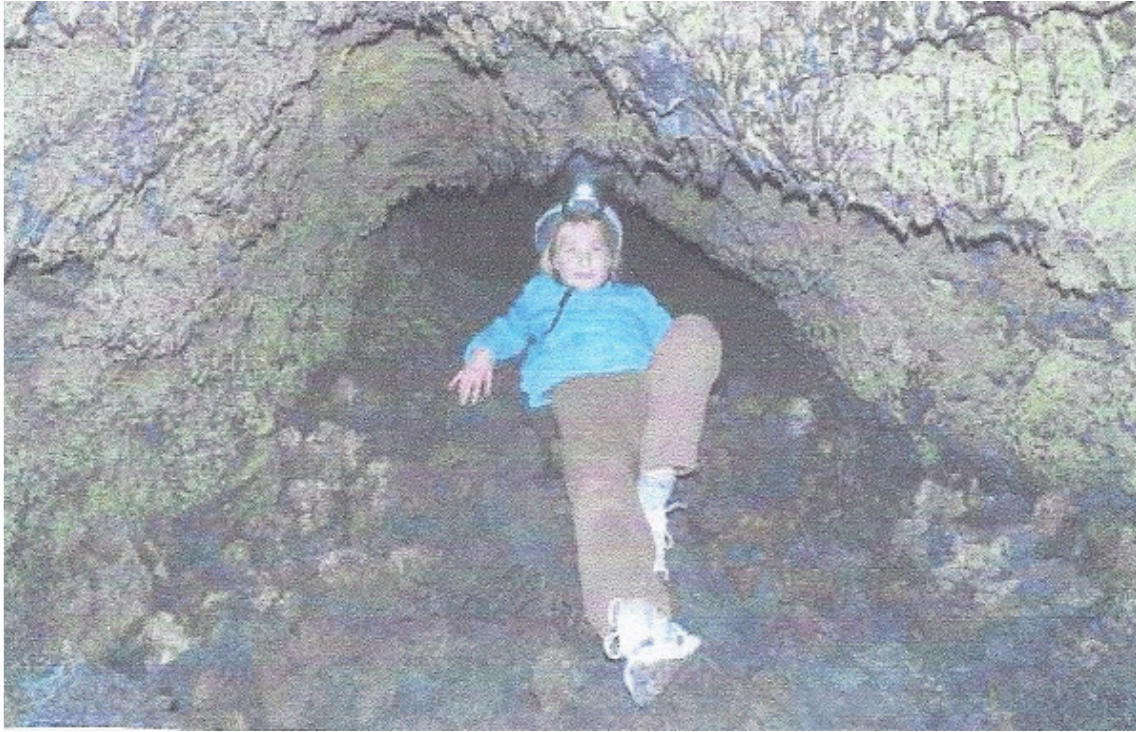
By Liz Wolff

Than-Q, than-Q, than-Q all for your efforts to make this year's Western Regional a success! From working in registration, managing the kitchen, leading trips, building badges, or helping where ever and whenever a hand was needed, I thank all of you for making my job easier. We had a final registration of 90 (22 SAG members + 7 SAG possible/future members attended), sold all extra t-shirts, and had a few people that I heard actually finished Hercules Challenges. We've paid all the bills and a party was planned to celebrate.

I thank especially Polly Merrill, J.D. Howard, and E.L. Hopkins for making special appearances on short notice to talk to those gathered for a trip back in time. Cooks and helpers, kitchen crew, you all did an outstanding job – and the food was delicious! Friday's potluck was outstanding, even the fire alarms going off. Vern had his burning permit, so we were legal. Registration, badges, keeping track of WCC dinner reservations – one of those things that must be done, thanx.

Trip leaders (Russ, Bill B., Bill D.), your trips were really appreciated, even though some participants were dragging upon their return! Photography by Ed, I thank you for taking it on even though you were volunteered to do it. Have you deleted "those" pics yet? The guide books I'm sure were great. Bill B., everyone seemed to enjoy them. My right hand man Dave did many days worth of website work, getting the write-ups out and the registration materials onto the web and out to the individual Grottoes, picking up supplies and t-shirts on his way up to the Beds, and doing other computer based things for me. Steve, for keeping me updated on the registration progress, so I could keep the Park updated at their request; and for the print-outs of pre-registration and forms to register people on site. Thanks to Arley for his artwork that looks so sharp on the tees.

All those involved in the final clean-up in the campground and the RC, thank-you for letting me go caving Monday with Bunnell & Gates (it was COLD sitting in the ice caves waiting for photos to be taken). Thank-you all for your efforts to make this a regional to remember. I'll see you at the meetings. Thar be kaves out thar ta map. . . **LW**



Hercules of Lava Beds Award winner Savanna Kennedy Photo from Chris Kennedy

My Trip to the Lava Beds By Savanna Kennedy

Here is Hercules Challenge, the so-called Twelve Labors of the Loop, blatantly kiped straight out of the 2010 Western Regional Guidebook, with the author graciously granting permission. All of these tasks are found along the cave loop at Lava Beds National Monument.

1. Check the water level, if any, in the bottom of Indian Well Cave.
2. Experience the artistic electric lighting in Mushpot Cave.
3. Pretend to drink from the Lava Brook of Lava Brook Cave.
4. Pass by Jupiter's Thunderbolt in Thunderbolt Cave.
5. Gaze upon the Golden Dome of Golden Dome Cave.
6. Read the old inscription near the little pillar in Hopkins Chocolate Cave.
7. Find the Blue Grotto of Blue Grotto Cave.
8. Peer into the hole at the top of the stairs deep inside Catacombs Cave.
9. Stand under the bright skylight in Sunshine Cave.
10. Circumnavigate Hercules Leg in Hercules Leg Cave.
11. Complete the entrance-to-entrance through trip of Sentinel Cave.
12. Pick up a modern trash item from inside a cave and remove it.

My daughter Savanna (10 years old) went with us to the regional meet at the lava beds. Before we went she thought she was claustrophobic and did not really want to do it, but as the trip approached she started looking forward to it, and over the weekend there caving, she went from being nervous and wanting to leave the caves to wanting to explore when the rest of us needed to go get a nap. This is her telling of the weekend. Chris Kennedy

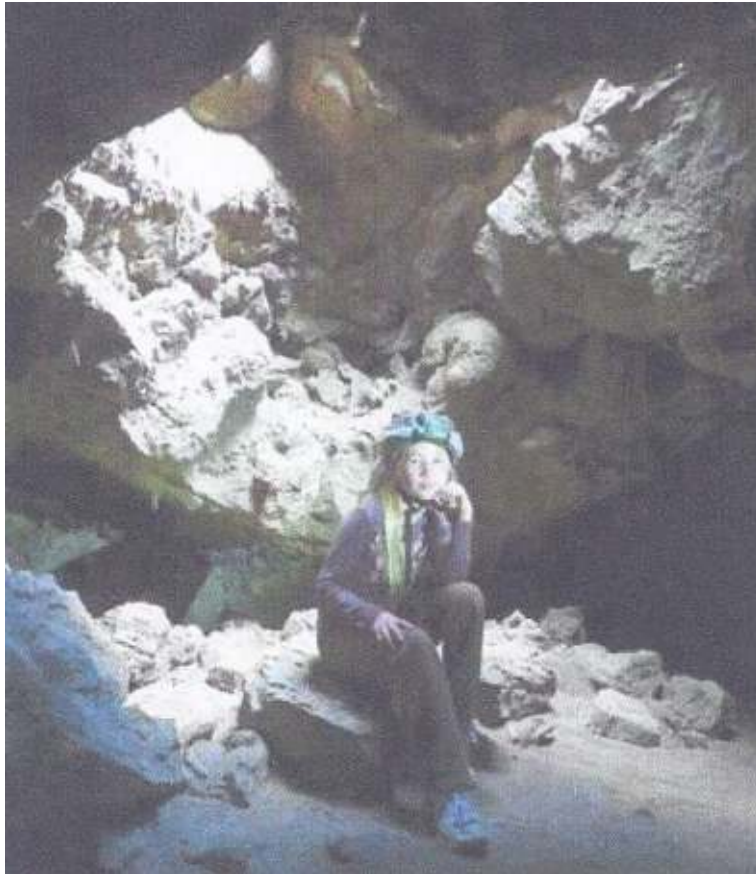
When we left Thursday evening we had a long drive, it was about four hours long. When we got to the cabin at the Hawk's Nest we cooked up some Trader Joe's pizzas and had some hot chocolate. We watched the movie The Bucket List on the computer and then went to sleep..

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The next morning we drove to Lava Beds National Monument. First we stopped at the campground, registered, set up our tents and then went to the visitor center. Then we hit some caves. Our first cave was Valentine. In the first cave I was quite nervous. Even though the passageways were big, they seemed scary to me. I kept asking my parents if we could leave. Next time we go I want to check out more of Valentine.

Once we left Valentine we went to Indian Well. It was very rocky. It felt like one of our climbing trips. At the bottom we had to check the water depth, it was one of Hercules challenges. That time in Indian Well I was still a little bit nervous, but two days later I came back and we did a tight spot in the back that seemed to go on forever and ever. Our next cave that first day was Mushpot, the easiest cave in the park. It had lights all the way through it. Later that night there was a slideshow in Mushpot Cave. The slideshow was awesome; it was about a cave that had lots of cool bugs. It was a cave in Borneo, we did not go there, it was very far away. Another cave was Labyrinth. It went on forever, or it seemed that way. We went down a very steep ladder to get into it. That made me a little nervous. I did really well in that cave. In the middle of that cave was Zeus's thunderbolt. We climbed over the thunderbolt and we were in Thunderbolt Cave. After Thunderbolt, I was so excited about caving that I wanted to do more.

My mom and my friend Macy went back to camp for a nap. My dad and I went to Lava Brook Cave. It was so much fun caving; just the two of us. In Lava Brook Cave, that's when I was most adventurous and really started to get into caving. We went a little ways into the cave and found the lava brook. We pretended to drink out of it. We explored a small place at the top of the brook and found ourselves back in Labyrinth. We explored a little more, then Labyrinth was our last cave of the day. We saved the rest of the cave loop for the next day to do with our friend Jed. I was so tired that night. I played one round of Go Fish in the tent with Macy and then fell asleep while she told me a story.



Savanna takes a short break

Photo from Chris Kennedy

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The next morning we ate breakfast and then Mom, Dad, Macy, Jed, and I were off to do more caves. We decided to join the historical tour. Our first stop was Merrill Cave. It was one of the ice caves. They gave us a history lesson and showed us the entrance to a bear cave. They gave us some cute little electric candles and then we started on our tour of the cave. In the cave it was very chilly. We went lower and lower and lower until we finally got to the end of the platform. From there we looked down and could see where people used to ice skate in the olden days. With our little electric candles we turned all the lights off and then turned them on one at a time. We wanted to go faster than the group on the historical tour and see more caves, so we went ahead to Skull Cave. The reason it was named Skull Cave was because many bones were found there. This cave had a very large mouth. We walked the smooth trail all the way to the back of the cave. At the back Macy and I saw a bone. On the way out we saw the historical group again. Then we went back to the cave loop to finish Hercules challenges.

Our first stop was Golden Dome. Golden Dome was a long adventure. Everywhere we looked we saw what could have been golden domes. The one we were sure was golden dome, we later found out from Bruce, was not it. Mom was really tired after Golden Dome so we took her back to camp. The rest of us went on to Hopkins Chocolate and had a good time looking for the pillar and Hopkin's name painted on the wall. Next we went to the Blue Grotto where Macy forgot her helmet. We looked around a little bit and then went back and got her helmet. We returned and found the blue grotto. After that it was Sunshine Cave. It was pretty quick and easy. It was fun to stand under the skylight. I like bats and we saw a pile of bat guano and a bat in Sunshine Cave. That was cool too. Only my dad, Jed, and I went on to Hercules Leg because Macy got tired and needed to rest. We explored quite a bit of Hercules Leg. In one place we saw a pile of bat guano and saw a bat fly next to a pillar. We kept going around pillars because we were not sure which one was the leg. Then we decided to head back to camp. That evening was the dinner with the caving group night. We had lasagna and salad for dinner. It was delicious. After dinner we met two other kids; a nine year old and an eleven year old. We played a little Go Fish and then went back to camp to rest for the next morning.



Labor#12 – Remove trash from cave. Might that be Go Fish mastermind Macy next to Savanna?
Photo from C. Kennedy

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Sunday morning we had a quiche, biscuit and gravy breakfast. There was some good hot chocolate there. After breakfast we went back and broke camp. We only had two challenges left. We started at Catacombs, and there were so many tunnels we did not know which to take, so we decided to explore. In the cave we found a stairwell and then the big hole we had to look down. Once we got there we started to head out because we had to go home that day. Our last stop was Sentinel Cave. We had to go all the way through it to complete Hercules challenge. There were lots of mouse droppings. We went through a side crawl that led us up a level. It was kind of hard to get down, but we managed. We continued heading out, it seemed like a short walk. At the end I found a coke can in a tight crevice. Collecting a piece of trash was also part of the challenge. It was funny watching my dad's legs flailing out of the hole while he was getting it. It was a long ride home, but it was a great time. Now we are back home and it's nice to be back in my own bed, but I am looking forward to our next trip. **SK**

HACK #171 Burnt Elderberry Cave

By Bighorn Broeckel

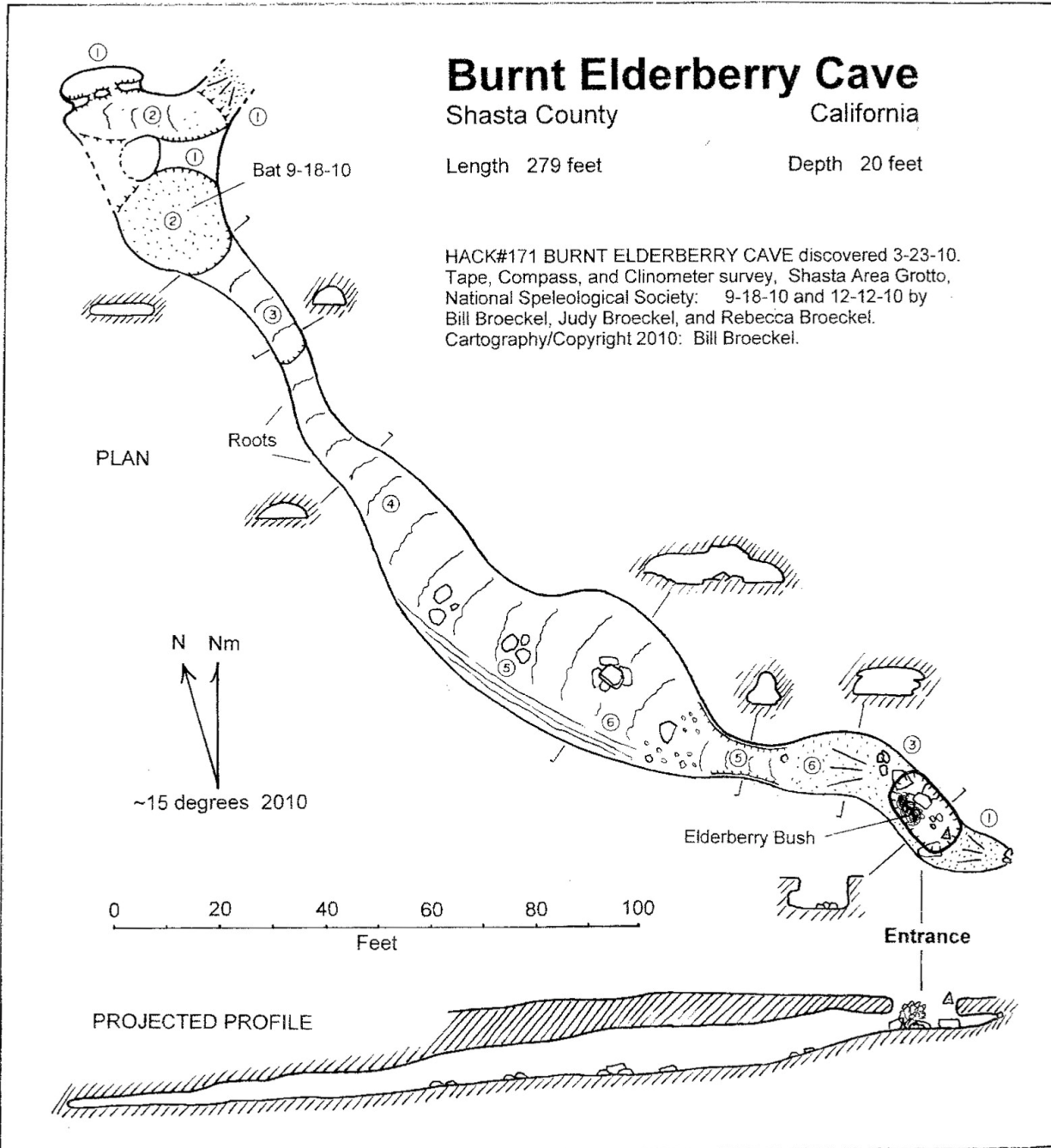
The lava upflow from Rusty Cave has always seemed to be a likely place for unknown caves to be hiding. However, ridgewalks have been hindered by brush. The situation has been like an open face sandwich, with the spread hiding the details of the bread. The spread in this case would be mixed manzanita and mountain mahogany, with the occasional tree or rattlesnake. Then came the fire season of 2009 when great swathes of the flows were burned to the boles. A ripple of this news went through the grotto pool, and it was open season for Shasta County lava tube hunters, though not officially. I recently found out that people are supposed to stay out of burnt areas, as a general rule.

Eventually, even I made a couple of forays during ice showers last winter, moving freely and unimpeded with excellent near visibility on all sides. Large portions of lava were entirely devegetated, and I was able to search wide areas efficiently. However, I was surprised at how few caves showed up. Of the two that did appear, Burnt Elderberry was the better cave. At dusk on 3-23-10, I was about ready to give it up when at last I came upon a modest sinkhole. Popping right in, I was happy to find going, sizable passage. I walked into a broad room. It looked like it might seal off. Without pushing further, I went home glad to have found something.

Later that year, in September, we were going by, and I remembered Burnt Elderberry as a cave that would be fun, quick, and easy to survey. The family agreed, so off we went to map a cave. Judy was on lead tape when we approached the suspected seal at the far end of the broad room. She made an interesting observation. The cave definitely was smaller, but it kept going. Soon we found ourselves taking more shots down an intact hands-and-knees lava tube festooned with roots. After a couple bends, the tube emptied out into a low pooling area. At our last station we were lying prone and checking out the sprawling crawlspace ahead. A nervous bat was on the ceiling, just a foot or two off the floor. Apparently we had been chasing him deeper down into the cave. The bat was the perfect excuse we needed to call off the survey, back out, and salvage some semblance of our "fun and easy" cave mapping trip.

In December we returned, ready to crawl and finish up the survey. This was after some big rains, snows, and melts had been through. The cave was dripping wet. The bat was gone, and the pooling area was interesting, but did not offer any further breakthroughs. We really had that poor bat cornered last time we were down there. The main cave appears to intersect a smaller tube. The far side is blocked with a longitudinal wall of lava. On top of the wall, two small gaps or notches appeared just big enough to wiggle through, the right hand gap being the easier. This gained a low chamber 6-ft wide and 12-ft long, and that was the end of the cave.

The December trip added 87 feet to the length of the cave and brought the total up to 279 feet. The Elderberry plant in the entrance sinkhole burned to the ground in 2009. About a year later, in September 2010, the plant had grown back and we were able to eat some of the elderberries. Another Shasta County lava tube has qualified as a cute little cave. **BB**



Map: Burnt Elderberry Cave

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Shasta Area Grotto

Devoted to the knowledge and understanding of caves



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Note: All photos supplied by C. Kennedy