

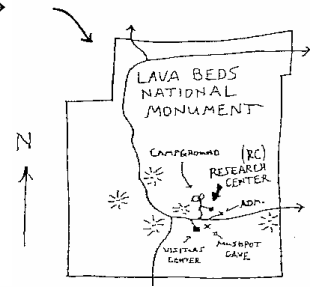
Steve Hobson rigs entrance to Dark Star Cave 2-5-11

**INSIDE – GUARANTEED 100% SOLUTION CAVE ARTICLES**

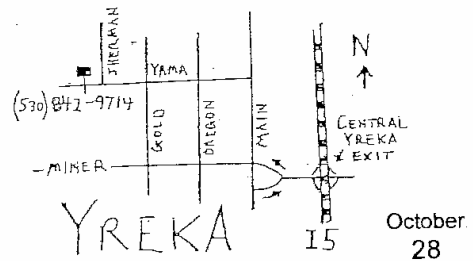
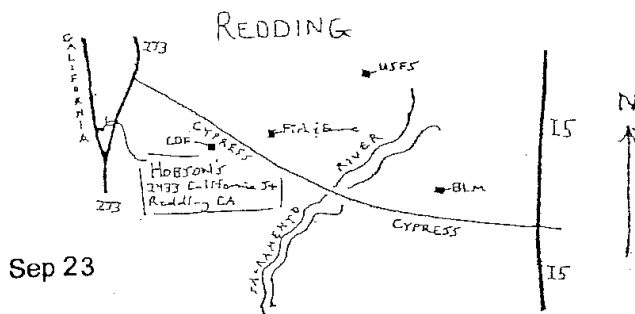
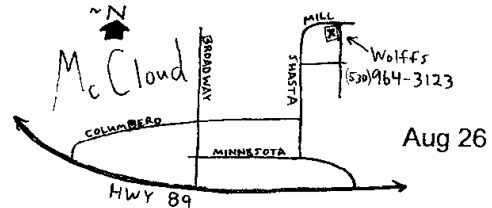
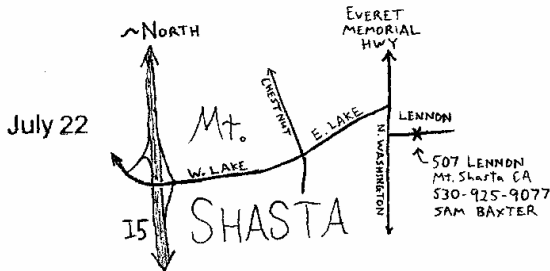
The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at different locations on the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG. Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription.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

- July 18-22 2011 NSS Convention in Glenwood Springs, Colorado.
- July 22 SAG meeting 7:30 at Sam Baxter's in Mt. Shasta.
- Aug 5-7 Help with Rescue Training at Lava Beds 530-964-3123. → → →
- Aug 26 SAG meeting 7:30 at Wolff's in McCloud 530-964-3123.
- Sept 2-5 Speleocamp pack train, contact Melanie 530-842-9714.
- Sept 23 SAG meeting 7:30 at Hobson's in Redding.
- Sept 24 Lake Level Cave trip.
- Oct 8 SAG/SAR cave rescue training.
- Oct 28 SAG meeting at Melanie's in Yreka.
- Oct 29 Sinking Waters Cave trip (weather permitting).



### MAPS TO MEETINGS



## SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

Our writers bring you all solution cave articles this time around. Liz Wolff and Steve Hobson bring you two different perspectives on the recent grotto trip and fun times in Rippled Cave and Black Chasm. Then read about how Hobson makes it happen up at Dark Star, a new and remote cave in Shasta County. More solution cave articles are done and waiting to be published in the RAG: Spathites (Rogers), Coyote Cave found (Hobson), and the May grotto trip (Hobson and Broeckel). There is also a Speleo-Ed wrap-up (Hobson) and some of us are a little behind on lava tube reporting. Finally, on a sad note, we are mourning the untimely loss of Amber, and thoughts and prayers are especially needed to go out to Rudi throughout this time of grieving.

**SAG MEETING MINUTES April 29, 2011**

April 29, 2011 Shasta Area Grotto meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:56 pm at the Wolff's home in McCloud, California. Present were Jim and Liz Wolff, Dave Smith, Ray Miller, Sam Baxter, Bill Broeckel, Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, and guests Brian and Gwen Janes of Yreka, and Doug and Tabitha Viner of Ashland. Secretary's Report: accepted as corrected. Treasurer's Report: Not available – banking has not been changed over. Web site: E-rag in PDF with color pictures, downloads available. SAG RAG: waiting for May and June information.

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: Rippled Cave trip including Black Chasm and maybe more scheduled for June 11th. Dave Smith in Charge of arranging trip. Grotto business cards: Sam Baxter has scanned the grotto patch and rough sketched what the grotto wants on the cards. He will send out to members for further input. He plans on taking it to the printer on May 9th. Steve moved that the grotto allow Sam to progress to the finished card at \$45.00 per 1000. Motion seconded. It was also brought up that the grotto needs to purchase more patches. Originals were obtained from Bob & Bob. Liz will contact them about ordering more. Nothing has been done with our checking account as Steve has been out of town for the last four weekends. Cave rescue training for Lava Beds has had a date change to July 9-10. We are not sure if we will have the use of the research building.

New Business: None.

Meetings: Friday May 20 Steve Hobson's in Redding. Fri. afternoon rope practice. 7:30 pm meeting. Saturday ridgewalking to find caves. Friday June 24 Lava Beds to scout caves for rescue training, possibly Skull Cave for ice and ladders for the vertical. Meeting at LABE. Sat./Sun July 9-10 Lava Beds cave rescue training – our meeting will be Friday at the Lava Beds. Friday August 26 Wolff's in McCloud. Sept. 2-5 Labor Day KMCTF Speleocamp. Packing in and out available, contact Melanie Jackson. Friday Sept. 24 Steve Hobson's in Redding, Sat. trip to Lake Level Cave. Sat. Oct. 8 SAR cave rescue training (note weekend change to 2nd Sat.) Steve will not be available for this training. Friday October 28 – Melanie Jackson's house in Yreka.

Trip Reports: Sat. 4/30/11 Tehama County cave trip by Dave Smith & Melanie Jackson. They didn't make it to the shelter cave as they were stopped by high water. Brad Rust and Steve Hobson went to Melvin Cave. Steve bolted the entrance drop (about 20'), the sketch map was accurate. It needs a real survey though. It blows cold air. Steve could not get through the Melvin. Steve also hiked up 1,000 ft in a new limestone area but saw no caves. Steve also went canyoneering in the Utah red rocks area. He missed Lehman Cave coming and going, but visited two man-made caves at Escalante Stairway. Bill & Judy Broeckel surveyed 430 ft. in a Sierra Nevada granite talus cave.

Meeting adjourned 9:26pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Melanie Jackson.

**MJ**

**SAG MEETING MINUTES May 20, 2011**

May 20, 2011 Shasta Area Grotto meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:45 pm at Steve Hobson's home in Redding. Present were Jim and Liz Wolff, Dave Smith, Neils Smith, Sam Baxter, Bill Broeckel, Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Hans Stein, Melanie Stevens, Brad Rust, and guest Errin Walker from Chiloquin, OR. Secretary's Report: accepted as corrected. Treasurer's Report: None available – bank account still has not been changed. Web site E-RAG: the March/April edition is now on line. All seems to be working well. SAG RAG: next month will have an article from Bruce Rogers/Butter Creek Cave. Ernie Coffman commented on picture arrangement in last issue (horizontal versus vertical format) and had a suggestion for improvement for better ease of viewing. Hopefully there will also be information on the Sat. 5-21-11 grotto caving trip.

continued – next page

Correspondence: Errin Walker requested information so she could attend meetings. Request from Daniel Landon for a caver from SAG to take his group of 10-14 young women ages 15-18 to a cave while they are spending a week studying and appreciating the wilderness resource. Would be the first week in August. Bill Broeckel said he might be interested.

Old Business: Those planning on going to the Rippled Cave (Weller Preserve) trip need to sign up through Dave Smith. The grotto will be having cards printed up by Office Depot. Jeff at the office there is a caver himself. Asked us for help with Boy Scouts going to caves. June 24 weekend campout will be at LABE. We will be locating sites for rescue skills practices for the August training of multiple govt. agencies. We will be camping at B Loop. The grotto meeting will be either Fri. evening or Sat. evening depending on when people arrive. Aug. 5-7 LABE rescue seminar/training we will be staying in the Research Center. It is reserved for SAG that weekend. At this time it will be Crater Lake, Klamath, Lassen and Modoc that will take part in the training. There could be 35 people or possibly more. It will be an intense two days and may include an evening as well. A vertical element at Skull Cave was requested. The plan is to have introduction, classroom practice, horizontal search and tight quarters/rough travel litter handling skills, and a vertical practice from the bottom of Skull Cave.

New Business: Brad Rust discussed a little about Forest Service Travel Management (reducing roads by 1/3) and what that means (it has been put on hold for at least 6 mos. to a year). The Forest Service has a MOU with the NSS that requires a 200 ft. buffer zone around caves. All this takes place internally & no cave locations will be released. The FS asked that the grotto do some WNS education. We have no cave closures at this time. A professor (Dr. Geo Graening) would like to do some non-destructive research on invertebrates (insects) at Samwel, Potter Creek and possibly Ancient Palace Cave after bat maternity colonies leave. The FS biologist would also like to take a look in APC when it won't disturb bats. Bill Broeckel and Steve Hobson went to Speleo Ed at Sequoia and attended the Western Region Meeting. They discussed the different classes they attended such as: The Ergonomics of Climbing Systems, Psychology of Rescue Teams, Suspension Syndrome (Harness Hang), Vertical Rigging Software, Sequoia Park Archeology and Park Biology. Joel Despain also talked about the future of caves, cave management, and cavers making comments about cave research and recreation as well as what might need to be done to have our voices heard. Joel discussed research being done at Lilburn, i.e., how the ebb and flow spring works. 3 more grottos have joined the Western Region (Oregon Grotto, High Desert Grotto and one Nevada grotto). There will be two 50% sponsorships to each NCRC, i.e., this year's three week-end modular NCRC. Talk to Marianne Russo or Mark Bowers if you are interested. Also discussed was the fact that many grottos do weekly trainings. The Cal Caver has three issues ready to be mailed and some color cover pictures.

Meetings: Saturday June 11 – Rippled Cave and Black Chasm, contact Dave Smith. Friday June 24 – Lava Beds Campground Loop B. Friday July 22 – Sam Baxter's home in Mt. Shasta, directions TBA in SAG RAG. Friday August 26 – Wolff's in McCloud. September 2 to 5 – KMCTF Speleocamp, want to have your gear packed in/out contact Melanie Jackson. Friday September 23 – Steve Hobson's in Redding. Saturday September 24 – Lake Level Cave survey. Saturday October 8 – SAG/SAR cave rescue training. Friday October 28 – Melanie's in Yreka. Saturday October 29 – Sinking Stream Cave/Eight Minute Pit trip, weather permitting.

Trip Reports: Steve Hobson and Bill Broeckel surveyed more of the big Sierra Nevada granite talus cave, now over 1,000 feet. Liz Wolff was at LABE and went to Upper Ice Cave and Heppe Cave. Broeckels mapped Spurious cave, a short lava tube.

Meeting adjourned 9:43pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Melanie Jackson.

**MJ**

## **RIPPLED CAVE TRIP** By Liz Wolff

June 11, 2011 several SAG members met in the town of Sutter Creek to go to Rippled Cave, owned and managed by the Western Cave Conservancy. Our group's trip leader was Wayne Cedidla, a novice group of three from the Mother Lode Grotto joined us led by Rick Gates, and Marianne Russo coordinated all of us. The SAG group consisted of Wayne, Melanie Jackson, Vern & Linda Cliff, Jim & Liz Wolff, Steve Hobson, Dave Smith and Sam Baxter. A hand-line was rigged to aid on the climb down the steep, muddy entrance slope. In the first room we all signed in to the register with name, grotto, towns and ages. From there we split up with Mel going with the novice group into a crawling passage back under the sink. The SAG group then headed deeper into the cave, under the Attics, and up to the Balcony. A short smooth crawl dropped some of us into the Bathtub, but we didn't emerge any cleaner than when we entered it. Marianne led Wayne, Steve, Dave and Sam up to the Attics from the bottom of the Balcony climb; the rest of us chose to return the way we had come, under the breakdown of the Attic.

Back in the register room, Marianne, Liz, Sam (that rash man promising to follow Liz anywhere!!) and Jim started the crawls, climbs and squeezes to get to the Cinderella Room. At the first tight spot Jim turned around, and at the second Sam broke his promise (>sob<) and backed out. Liz and Marianne bravely continued alone to the Cinderella Room with its white formations and curtains of water spangled roots. We came out a LOT muddier than anyone else got in the cave due to one small muddy pool that we had to slither through, no avoiding that one. On the way out Dave met us at the first part of the crawls from the register room, saying if we'd been any longer, the rest of them would have been forced to try to rescue us. We hadn't even been two hours, and it was really pretty back there ... We emerged from the cave with our teal & green coveralls almost a uniform brown and lunch in our sights. After lunch most of the cavers went to the Big Room rigged with a rope and an aluminum ladder. It isn't a long drop, but very awkward. Several cavers found artifacts from the time that the entrance cliffs were quarried for limestone to make cement in the late 1800's. Before quarrying, the then entrance area was used by the owners for dances and the like.

The next item on our agenda was Black Chasm, a commercial cave only a few miles away as the crow flies, but not as the road winds. After getting 1/2 off the ticket price, being NSS cavers, we were wowed by the incredible decorations from the entrance to the end of the tour. Most of the walkways and stairs are suspended in this cave, and many of the decorations are within reach, but no one touched, just pointed and oohed and aahed. Crossing one bridge a lake could be seen about 40 ft below. In the room at the bottom of the stairs, flowstone and some really incredible helictites covered every surface. Dark voids tantalized .... but we couldn't go there.

Leaving the cave, we drove to the town of Volcano for dinner at Giannini's Italian Restaurant. Three hours, many courses and one really slow dinner later, we split up, heading for home or another stop along the road to home. A good time was had by all. After arriving home, the brown coveralls met Mr. Garden Hose and resumed their normal teal & green color, with a layer of mud added to the back yard. Thanks to Marianne for leading the larger group, Wayne for leading the SAG group, and Dave for organizing the whole shebang for us. **LW**

## **RIPPLED CAVE TRIP** By Steve Hobson

Trip Report: June 9-12, 2011. Rippled Cave and Black Chasm Cave. Cavers present: Liz & Jim Wolff, Melanie Jackson, Wayne Cedidla, Dave Smith, Vern & Linda Cliff, Sam Baxter, Steve Hobson, Marianne & Jerry Russo, and a bunch of SFBC/MLG folks.

Well, the SAG contingent, sans Sam, met at Wayne's house in Rancho Cordova. He has a very interesting curved chimney. Around 6pm we decided that we would go have pizza for dinner and headed to Round Table. As we were walking in the door to Round Table, Dave spotted a Thai place and the plan was Changed. No pizza for Jim. We had a nice dinner of Thai food though.

The next morning we met at the Post Office and caravanned the rest of the way to Rippled Cave. We met Marianne, received our cave briefing, and headed to the cave. It was a very long walk, all of 50 ft. It is a nice cave with lots of tight crawly spaces. While we explored, Marianne and Liz headed for the Closet. Yes, the Closet. The rest of us could not even imagine getting to the Closet, as the way, was way too small. We finished exploring and went out for lunch. We waited and waited for Marianne and Liz to come out of the Closet, but they never did. We gathered a cave rescue team and gave out assignments. Dave headed back into the cave to survey the situation. Finally we heard voices. Liz and Marianne were coming out of the Closet. A successful rescue operation, with only one body deployed. Damn, we are good.

While Liz and Marianne ate lunch the rest of us explored the Big Room. We could not get to the Big Room from inside the main part of the cave, as the way, was way too small. We finished our explorations around 4pm, said our goodbyes, and headed over to the Black Chasm Cavern for the walking tour. Sam went home for mushroom picking. After the cave tour, which was very nice, we went to Giannini's Italian Restaurant, in Pine Grove for dinner. The 72 course meal took about three hours to complete. Sam, you missed a good one. No, Jim did not get pizza. It was a very nice meal.

Wayne, Melanie, Linda, and Vern headed back to Wayne's house for the night. Jim, Liz, Dave and Steve headed for Dave's house in Chico. The SFBC/MLG folks went wherever SFBC/MLG folks go. The next morning Jim, Liz, Dave, Joan, and Steve visited for awhile. Jim, Liz, and Steve headed home around 11am. The SAG folks thank the Russo's, the Smith's, and Wayne for the hospitality. They were very gracious hosts. **SH**

## **DARK STAR TREKS**

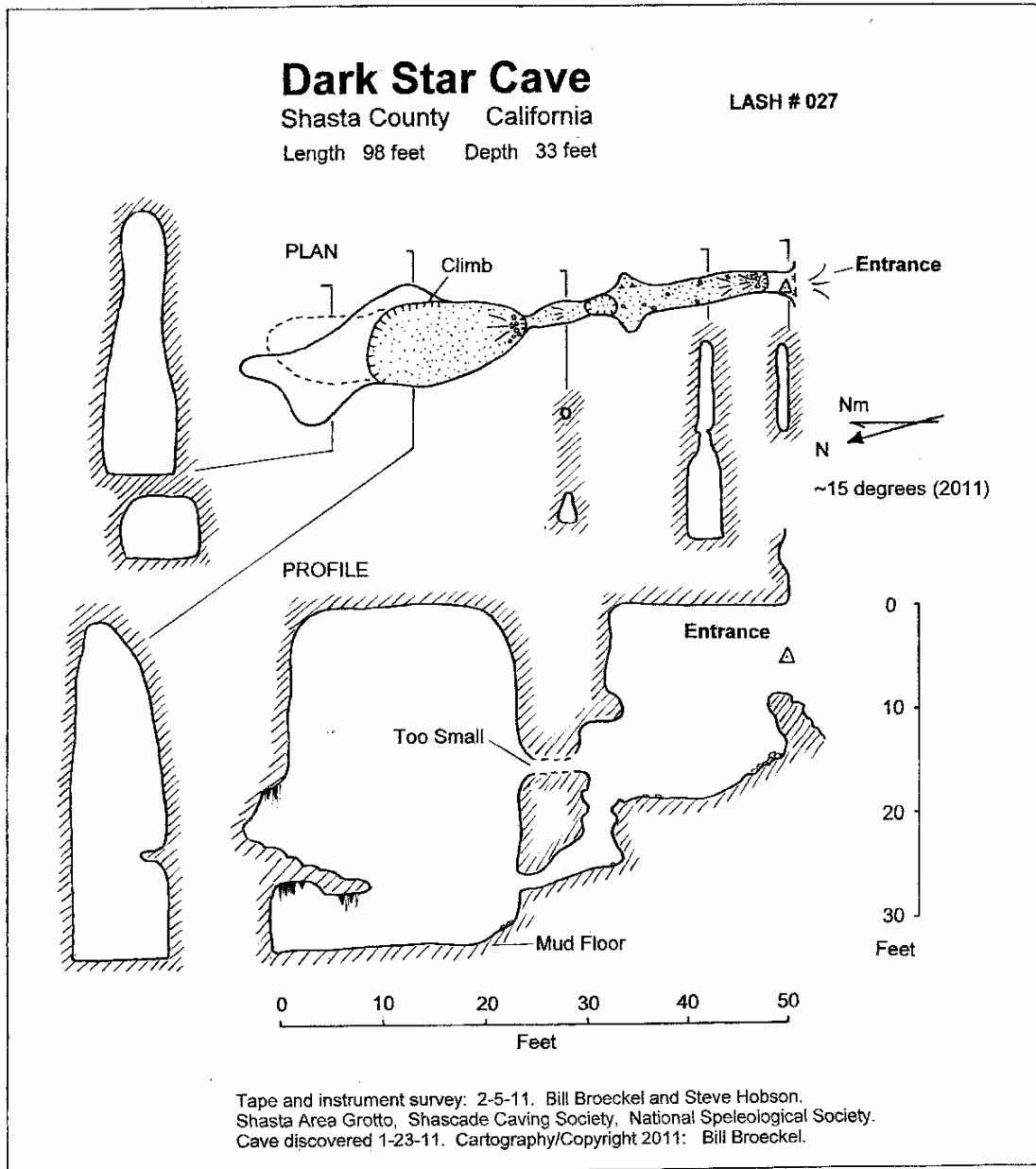
By Bighorn Broeckel

One winter day (1-23-11), I was out in a remote part of Shasta County, poking around, tracking down old trails, and searching for lost pits. Many rugged outcrops of Upper Triassic limestone made the going rough, but interesting. One particularly sharp and devilish rock topped the 1,000 foot slopes of jungle, and the overhanging blue cliffs were girdled with thickets of poison oak. My botanical knowledge that poison oak thickets are harmless and dormant in winter allowed me to boldly go where no fool had gone before. Such a nice, cool day too, I didn't have to carry any water at all. Needless to say, a few hours later I was in pretty sad shape. The rash erupted a few days later. The lost pit never showed up, but ... I did find a vertical crack in the rock face.

Cracks in rocks are actually quite common, but this one was a foot wide. It was big enough that even I could get in. In fact, you could say it was a walk-in cave entrance, though I had to walk sideways. The bottom dropped out right away. So, just 2-3 ft in to the crack cave, the choices were a nasty squeeze straight down underfoot, or vertical caving deeper in the crack, where the whole thing gets wider, and an entrance chamber bells out underneath. The third choice was go home and drink. I went for choice #3 and lived to cave another day. But first I whipped out my brightest minimag to see what I could see. Yes, there was a very reasonable entrance chamber down in there, the floor sloped into the mountain, good, and at the far end of the room, boy, that sure looked like a pit back there. As time went on, the pit grew, and eventually went down about 1,000 ft. I even gave the cave a fancy name – Dark Star.

Now I don't find cave leads like that very often, no, not very often at all, so I did some yakkity-yak at the grotto meeting and hooked Hobson into a return trip. That happened on the first weekend of February during a spell of mild weather. We actually camped out. Steve brought the pie. Dark Star was our first cave priority, so the first morning we headed up the 1,000 foot slope of steep jungle. I was convinced that the first drop required a re-directional bolt, then who knew about the second drop, which had to be at least 2,000 feet deep. Luckily we opted to leave the back-up battery pack behind. We couldn't convince any mules to join us on this trek, so Steve got to be the mule that hauled up the electric bolt drill.

continued – next page



Map: Dark Star Cave

Some hours of sweat later, Steve tiptoed sideways into the narrow entrance and spotted a loop-hole on the left-hand wall above the drop. All it took was a doubled loop of webbing to make a solid anchor. So much for the re-directional bolt. The second pit turned out to be just big enough to get into. It went straight down – for nine feet. From there a crawlway sloped on down, further into the mountain. Just a couple body lengths a small hole showed up with echoing darkness beyond. After re-arranging a few floor rocks, I was able to slide on through, and over a 3-ft vertical drop, entering a tall room.

This chamber was two or three times larger than the entrance chamber. A ledge divided the back of the room into short upper and lower levels. Some of the walls had draperies, and there were a few small stalactites. There were no leads, except for a tiny drain hole in the floor of firm mud. Not quite the 3,000-ft deep cave I imagined, but still pretty cool.

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Side-slip through this small hole to enter the inner chamber  
of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11

The ledge was 9-10 feet above the floor, and it took an easy V(-5) bouldering move to get up there on the right side. Coming down, I figured I could reach the floor with a full body extension two-arm hang off one of the better holds. However, when I assumed that position, my toes didn't reach the floor. Before I could decide what to do next, I lost my grip and fell ... about 1/2 inch. So, there I was standing safely on the soft, even floor, heart thumping, and just perfectly fine. Now, that was yet another one of Bighorn's wild cave adventures. If you do something enough times, everything will happen.

Winter days are short, so we came down the mountain after dark. Steve had a good GPS track, and that helped us find our gear stash, and kept us from getting lost out there. We made it back to camp in time to heat up some supper, and eat more pie. Our camp was quite wet, I have never seen such a heavy dew. That was the worst of it though, not bad for a winter camping trip to the Dark Star. **BB**





Outside landscape of the limestone formation 1-23-11



General view into upper level of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11



Curtain in upper level of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11



Detail in upper level of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11



General view into lower level of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11



Detail in lower level of Dark Star Cave 2-5-11





Smaller drapery on right side of upper level in Dark Star



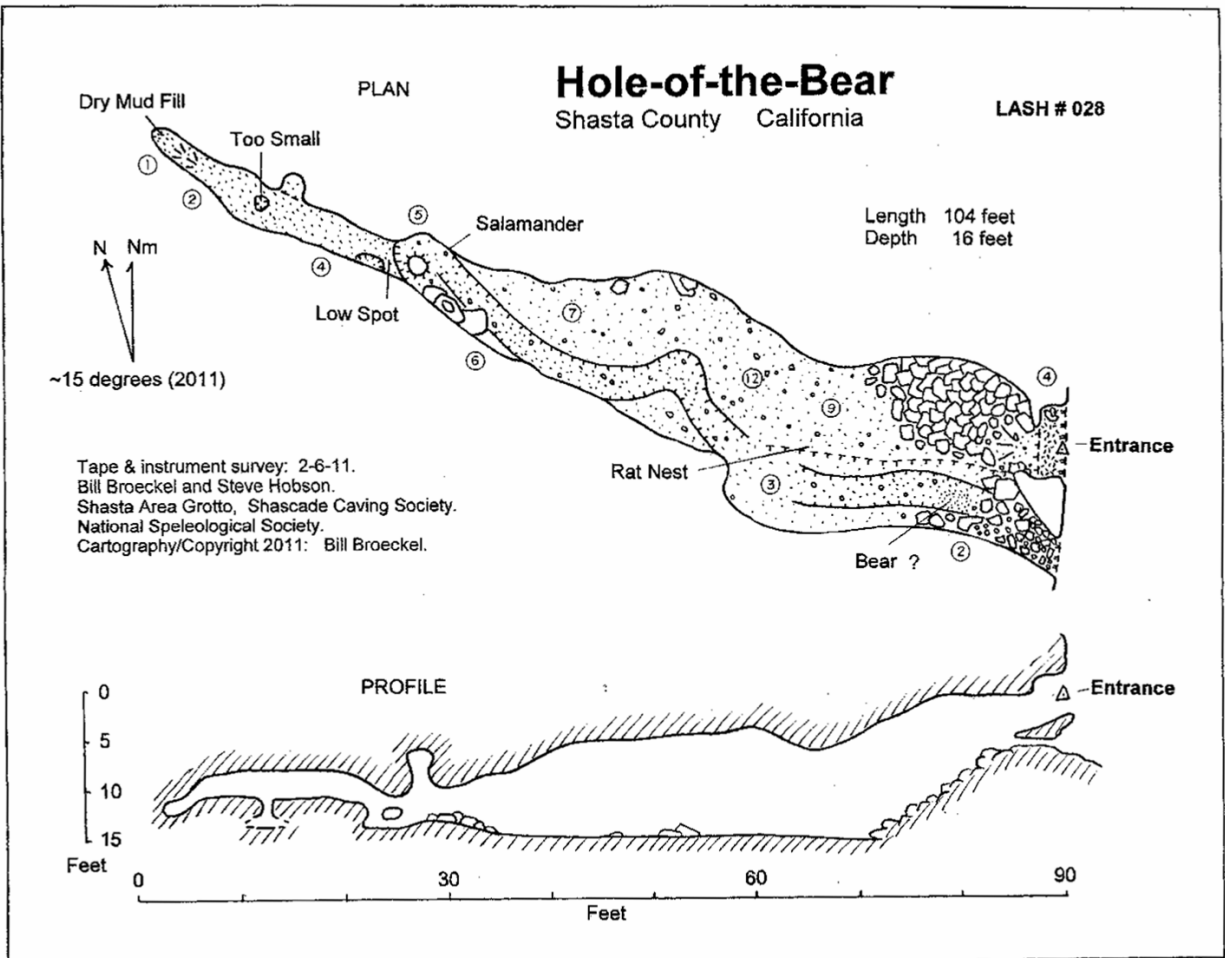
Detail, probably in lower level in Dark Star Cave 2-5-11

**MORE CAVES IN BEAR LAND** By Bill Broeckel

2-6-11 The next morning (Superbowl Sunday) after the Dark Star trek, Steve Hobson decided to show me some real caves. Along the rough road, we came upon a very sad scene indeed. A poor sick or wounded bear was staggering along, barely able to walk and falling over frequently. He rolled off a bank and lost himself in some bushes, out of sight. We felt very sorry for this suffering bear, but there was nothing to do.

The first cave stop was Hole-in-the-Wall. At 328-ft surveyed, it is the longest cave so far in this entire limestone formation. Water was flowing out of this sump cave. When the flow stops, the entrance sump has to be siphoned out prior to entry. Not today.

We kept hiking on to another cave that we could perhaps map. However, on one of Hobson's previous visits, a bear was in the cave. Today we had to decide who would go in first to check for bears ... just another one of Hobson's little hairball adventures. The bear den was vacated, so we mapped the cave. It was a nice, big phreatic tube walking passage, long abandoned, high and dry. Inexplicably, it diminishes down to a desiccated mud plug after about 100-ft. Hole-of-the-Bear is now a Cave-in-the-Books.



Map: Hole-of-the-Bear Cave

continued – next page



Entrance to Hole-of-the-Bear measures 8-ft wide and 4-ft high (on the left) 2-6-11



Inside the Hole-of-the-Bear, the bear's refuge is on the left 2-6-11





Hole-of-the-Bear: Hobson at the end of the cave 2-6-11



Hole-of-the-Bear: rat nest on ledge 2-6-11

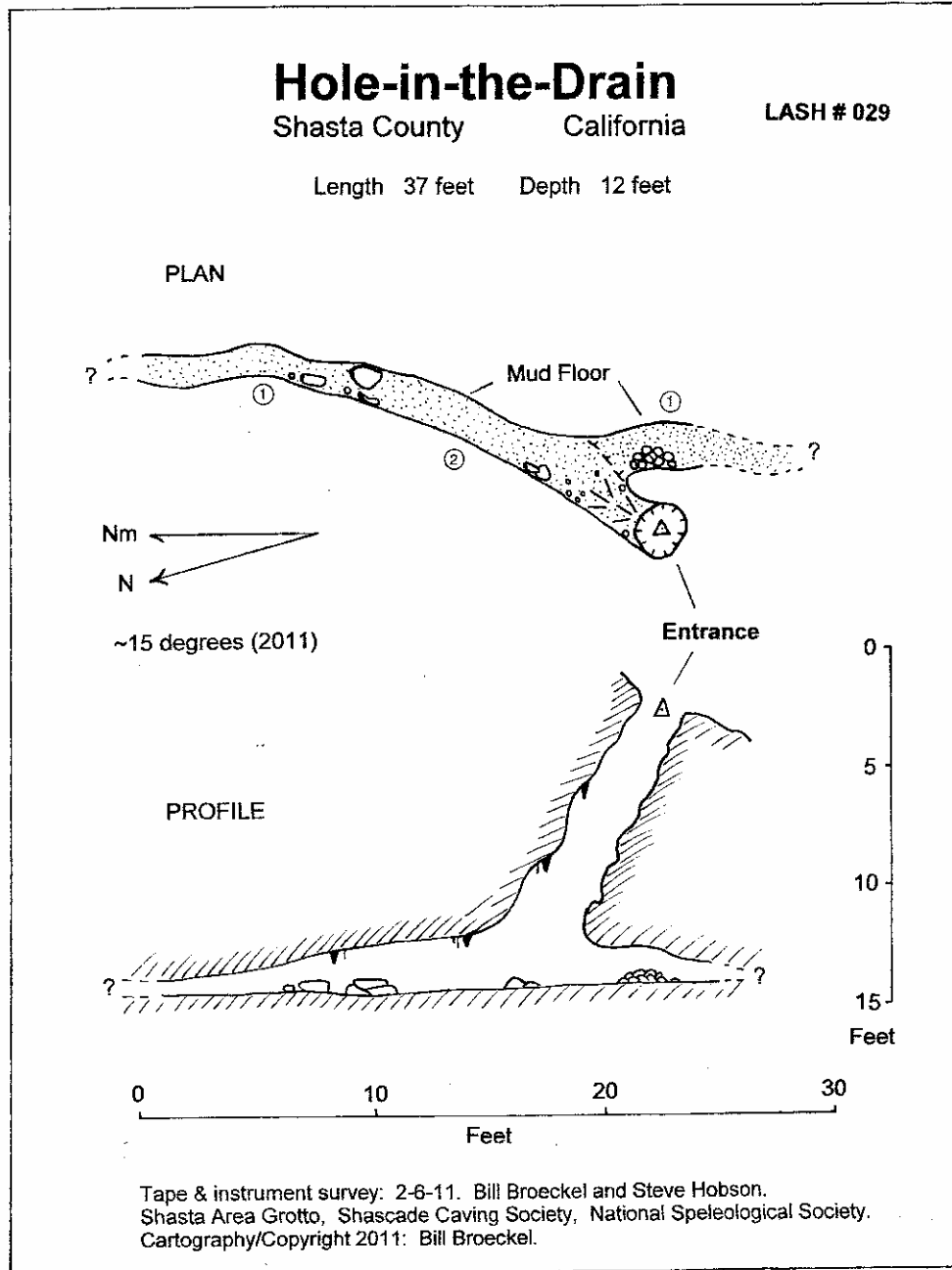


Hole-of-the-Bear: tough dig at the end of the cave 2-6-11



Hole-in-the-Wall entrance 2-6-11





Map: Hole-in-the-Drain Cave

Heading back, we traversed higher, and Steve came upon a small vertical hole. I dropped in and found a short horizontal passage on the bottom, so I called for the instruments and tape. I called out data while Steve kept the book. Steve named this one Hole-in-the-Drain, another example of his hyphenated-cave-name tendency. Hole-in-the-Drain is headed for, and very near to, an active surface erosional feature (dirt gully). The short horizontal passage is nearly filled to the ceiling with mud. It looks like a dirt plug might have been blown out of the entrance by a water pressure event, maybe recently. We did our quick survey and thought it was a pretty interesting little cave. We still made it home in time for the second half of the Superbowl. The Green Backpackers beat the Pittsburg Squealers. The Bears weren't in this Superbowl, though they came very close to it this year. Go Bears!

BB



Limestone pinnacles above Dark Star Cave 1-23-11

**SAG RAG**  
**2916 Deer Mdws. Rd.**  
**Yreka CA 96097:**

**STAMP**

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