

# sag rag

30:6 Nov-Dec 2011



Large, coarse lavacicles located above ledges in Flushing Wind Cave, which is near D Way Cave. In the lower photo, possible clayworms in a lava tube are seen in the caliche on the ledge below the lavacicles. Note that the overall length of the tape measure, handle to tip, is 13-in.

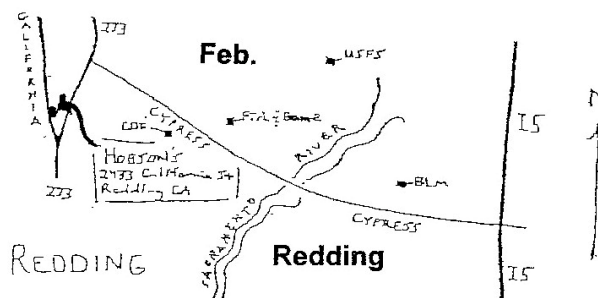
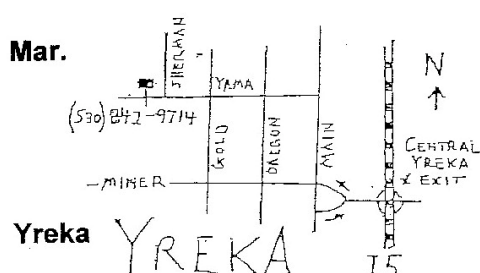
**INSIDE – MIXED BAG OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAVES – MOSTLY LAVA**

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 2012

- Feb. 24 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Hobson's in Redding. 530-242-8707.  
 Feb. 25 Samwel cleanup or other. 530-242-8707.  
 Mar. 23 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Melanie's in Yreka. 530-842-9714.  
 Mar. 24 Hat Creek horizontal survey and exploration. 530-842-3917.  
 Apr. 27 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Kennedys in Weaverville.  
 Apr. 28 Trinity area caving.  
 May 18 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Baxters in Mt. Shasta. 530-925-9077.  
 May 19 Coyote Cave survey.  
 June 25-29 NSS Convention in Greenbrier Valley, West Virginia.

## Maps to Meetings



## SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

This RAG wraps up 2011 and as we move into 2012 a theme appears, that is taking care of business, old business. The old business I have in mind is not the cave register program or a stray problem tabled at a meeting long ago. Rather it is caves we know about that still need surveys, surveys already done that need finished maps, and even finished maps never published, languishing in la-la land, and yet waiting to be shared with the greater world of Speleology. So to that end we have Wolfe Den. How long has it been since Dan Wolfe and crew, all covered in mud, burst into the office saying "Guess what we did while working today?" Now here is the map of Wolfe Den, and the question has its answer. Then one of Russ Yoder's many fine cave finds acquires a survey and published map in another triumph of cave description – Rat Castle Cave. Liz Wolff did the cartography on both of those. In another instance, we were able to catch up on Jim Wolff's backlog, with a wintry survey day at D Way Cave. In a way, all caves are old business, so look for more of the same in 2012.

The editor would like to thank the grotto for re-installing last year's officers, and saving me some work. I promised some more caves like Wolfe Den, caves in cracks, but I don't have them done. They tend to be long and tall, but very narrow, and a little different to draw. Note that the Redding meeting at Hobson's was postponed to February. Steve says that if the Samwel Cave restoration trip arrangements still are not ready, he has some other things we can do in that area, such as – mapping old caves! See you there.

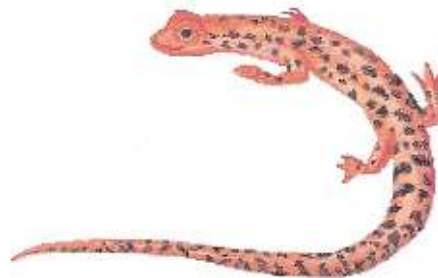
**BB**

**SAMWEL TRIP REPORT      by Hans Stein**  
**October 29, 2011**

Eight of us (Brad Rust, Ethan Rust, John Tinsley, Bill Frantz, Peri Frantz, Mark Linn, Preston Addison and myself) met at the McCloud Bridge on a brisk morning late in October. After everyone made it to the meeting point, we drove in caravan to the Samwel trailhead. We decided to skip vertical work this trip (a quick vote showed no one wanting to haul gear/rope so early in the day). We donned cave suits and coveralls and headed down trail to the cave.

While Brad worked on unlocking the gate, Bill set to work on trying to remove a small patch of graffiti at the cave mouth. A soft brush and water seemed to do the trick, so we moved on. Passing through the gate and down into the first room acted as a filter, with Peri (who forgot knee pads at home in Los Gatos) deciding to sit back and wait for the rest of us. While Preston and Mark rigged a handline to the pit room, the rest of us poked around looking at formations and watched a lone bat circle around the room. We then climbed up into the pit room and started looking at graffiti for possible removal. It was soon found that previous visitors had used everything from paint to crayons to write and draw, not to mention unidentified objects for etching. The crayon came off fairly easy in our trial efforts, with the paint and etchings proving much more difficult. After peeking at the rim of the pit, we descended back to the main room. From there we squeezed into the next gallery, where Brad pointed out some prehistoric bones on our way to the Magic Pools. The others dropped into the Wintun Room with Mark and myself hanging back looking for more graffiti above. After our search, Mark and I headed back to the main room while swapping cave stories. After a short break, the two of us climbed to the gate to wait for the others.

Soon everyone was back in the mouth of the cave and we headed back up the trail to the cars. Once back at the cars a trailside discussion followed as we made an outline for a follow up trip in January. Contact info was swapped and we parted ways with the promise of future cave trips filling our minds. **HS**



## SHASTA AREA GROTTTO MEETING      December 2, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:53 pm at Doug and Tabitha Viner's home in Ashland, OR.

**Members Present:** Ernie Coffman, Jim & Liz Wolff, Ed Bobrow, Errin & Ned Walker, Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Wayne Cedidla, Doug & Tabitha Viner, David Smith.

**Minutes:** were accepted as corrected.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob & Bob check for \$124.00 from bank balance of \$1731.34.

**Website:** Normal new SAG RAG is on it. Calendar of events will be updated soon.

**SAG RAG Report:** January issue will have Wolfe Den and Samwel Cave trip report by Hans Stein and maybe some other crack caves.

**Correspondence:** Bob & Bob ½ payment sent for grotto patches. John Tinsley regarding Samwel Cave restoration, paint may come off easier than thought. OR caves sent another off trail adventure cave trip brochure. Our grotto may think about going on the trip as a Saturday activity. Received WNS CD by Peter Youngbear. Received a CD about 2012 convention. Brad Rust sent a proposal on Samwel Cave Restoration. Steve H. will send it to Liz.

**Old Business:** Grotto patches being processed.

**New Business:** 2012 Officers nominations – Chairman: Liz Wolff, Vice Chairman: David Smith, Secretary: Melanie Jackson, Treasurer: Steve Hobson.

### **Trip Reports:**

Erin Walker was lowered by rope 60 feet and then lifted out of Duo Pits near Sheridan Mountain, took an hour and a half trip into a lava tube some 100 meters (325 ft.) in length.

Jim Wolff, Matt Leissring, and Heather McDonald while at LABES went into a 100 ft. as yet unnamed nasty grabby crawl.

Ed Bobrow, Liz and Jim Wolff and Bill Devereaux noted that Collapsed Dome Cave under 100 ft. has two more side passages and they looked into Crud Crawl Cave. They did a 2000 ft. surface traverse.

Ed Bobrow is training at LABE to be a guide for Crystal Ice Cave.

Wayne Cedidla is going to Ursa Major Cave in Sequoia with Marianne Russo and Joel Despain Dec. 8th.

Curl Creek Ridge walk 10/29/11. Bill B. and Steve H. and Dave Smith. They went to look for Bus Stop Cave. Took the dogs and doesn't recommend that. Heard shot guns, an Asian showed up said he was hunting squirrels. They should have taken radios as they

split up from top and lower levels. They got there via boat. Curl creek disappears into a hole too small to enter. They didn't find the cave(s) or anything that looks like caves.

11/1/11 Dusty cave surveyed 309 ft. for CRF. Bill Broeckel.

11/29/11 Slinker and Auxiliary Caves surveyed – 82 ft. and 38 ft. Broeckels. Caves are near Slither Cave, there were winter road conditions above 4,000 ft.

Ernie told about his NSS convention Glenwood CO trip he took via train, from Davis to Glenwood Springs. Morley Hardaker and Ernie went. First a delayed train start, then the train was stuck in middle of the desert in Utah due to computer problem. Hotel for banquet canceled at last minute – it was held in large tents. It was very hot. There were some great Geology trips. The Howdy party was fantastic for adults. On the Glenwood Springs return train ride another long delay in getting out of Glenwood Springs due to Missouri River Flood.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Melanie Jackson - Shasta Area Grotto Secretary

**MJ**



## **ABOUT BATS By Ray Miller**

### **LUNCH**

When you take up flying for a living it requires a lot of energy to keep going. For this reason bats have hearty appetites. Most of us have heard about bats eating their weight in bugs each night, but few grasp the significance of this. That's a powerful lot of food. If we ate our weight in food each day we would need to consume about 200 Big Macs. Hold the pickles. And then consider the matter of weight. Double your weight, and when you finally make your way home you would likely make a

better door stop than a flying machine.

The bats thought about this and came up with a solution; if you speed up the digestion process you need not carry a lot of unprocessed food. The transit time through the gut of a bat is on the order of 20 minutes, so while the front end of the bat is busy capturing insects the back end is acting like a little pepper shaker sprinkling guano over the landscape. You can accomplish a lot if you don't watch TV. **RM**

## WOLFE DEN

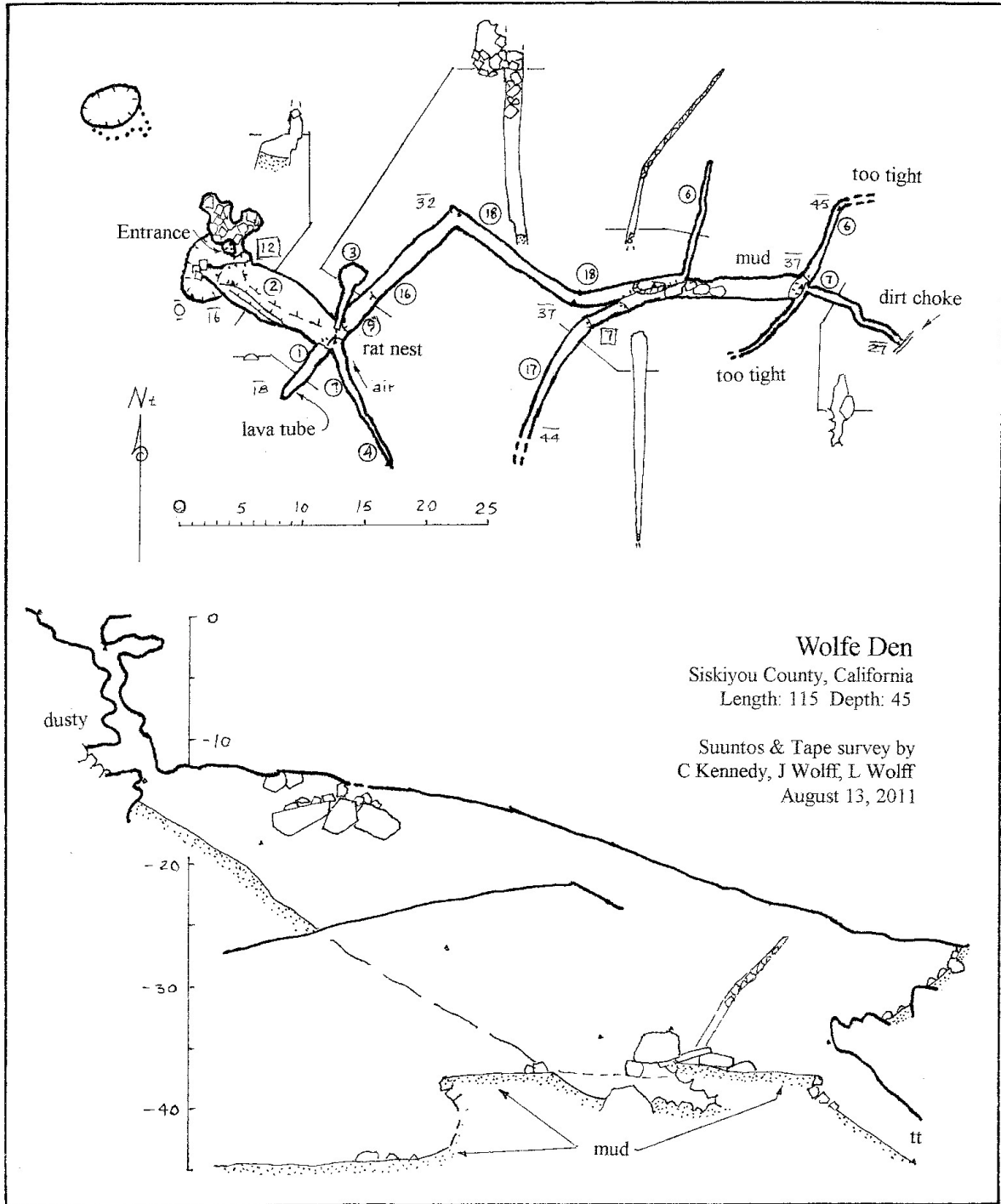
### Trip Report 13 Aug 2011

By Liz Wolff

There was a hole reported a few weeks ago by Dallas Carlon, and then pics were sent a couple weeks later, showing a log in a pit right next to a road. Dallas didn't hold out much hope for it going anywhere or doing anything. He reported that it was opened by recent logging activity. And after wending our way over the river and through the woods, it really didn't do anything. But... Chris Kennedy, Jim & Liz Wolff arrived late morning, looked at the 3 aligned sinks and the Log Cave and decided to at least rappel into it a ways to see how far to the water level (splashes could be heard when we approached the hole) and how deep the water. By the time Chris had dropped down 15 feet with his feet just above the water, it was so murky that nothing could be seen. With a weight on the end of the tape it was measured to 10 feet deep. Chris found the walls of the pit to be composed entirely of compacted dirt and rocks in a chamber about 10X10 feet. The log is approximately 24 inches in diameter, about 28 feet long, and seems to be firmly wedged in place. Several questions still exist: is it sitting on the bottom, a ledge, or dirt? Is there solid rock under the water? The water level in the pit and the creek appear about level, are they tied together? There appeared to be no movement in the water, is there a cave below or only a water penetrable layer between the creek and the pit? So, our own pics taken, a GPS reading taken on each sink and the pit, we left for "plan B" – the Wolfe Den.

The Wolfe Den was found around 25 years ago by a timber cruiser (?) named David Wolfe, no relation to us. There is a buried fault, still traceable, several feet away, but the cave doesn't really appear to be connected; I could be totally wrong too. The entrance is in a small and shallow sink less than a quarter mile from the road. The top part of the cave is talus which you climb down through to reach a dirt floor and solid walls. It has somewhat the appearance of a lava tube, but the tectonic nature of the cave, a long meandering narrow crack, is soon revealed. The cave is dry and dusty for the first 20 feet, then damp, and around another corner, wet and muddy. The widest width in the cave is less than three feet, most is less than two feet wide, the highest part of the crack about 20 feet. The walls are smooth lava and the slope steep enough that handholds are beneficial. The floor is uniformly dirt, detritus and small rubble until you reach the bottom of the cave, where there is some large-ish breakdown in the mud. A step down into a narrow channel and a sharp left turn lead into the final, humanly passable passage. From there it goes down and around another corner, but too narrow to continue. That seems to be the name of the game for this cave. At the breakdown an almost parallel passage takes off, with a six foot drop in the floor, but it wasn't entered as the crack narrowed below the drop and we could all envision the death trap it could become if one of us slid down into the narrow part. We surveyed the cave to 115.4 feet in length and 44.78 feet in depth. While there we found a dead mouse, several recent (still green) rodent nests, one black beetle and one millipede.

From there we hiked to the Twin Crater Caves, named unimaginatively 1, 2, 3 and Ice Cave. There was still snow lurking below the entrances and ice on the breakdown. These are talus caves, voids squirming their way through large boulders to join up with each other, but not necessarily humanly passable. We didn't spend long here looking at the old cans (+ 100 years) and other "stuff" outside the entrances left by loggers (?) long ago before hiking across the swale to poke into more holes in another boulder pile, then back to the truck with the minty fresh aroma of pennyroyal wafting along with us. **LW**



Map: Wolfe Den Cave

## RAT CASTLE CAVE

### Trip Report

By Liz Wolff

Saturday August 27, 2011 SAG members Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Jim & Liz Wolff met Russ Yoder on the tracks near Les Paul cave with the intention of hiking up to Half Moon Cave to survey. Russ wanted to do a closer cave, Rat Castle, due to the predicted 95+ degree temperatures. Rat Castle Cave is located south of the tracks and the road is almost visible from the cave. GPS readings were taken and the survey begun. The entrance breakdown slopes steeply for 35' vertically before coming to a more level cauliflower aa and clinker floor. On the breakdown, a group of moths was found and a rat midden, but no mammals were seen. Near the top of the slope is a hollowed out area about three feet in diameter ringed with pebbles, possibly a bear's bed?

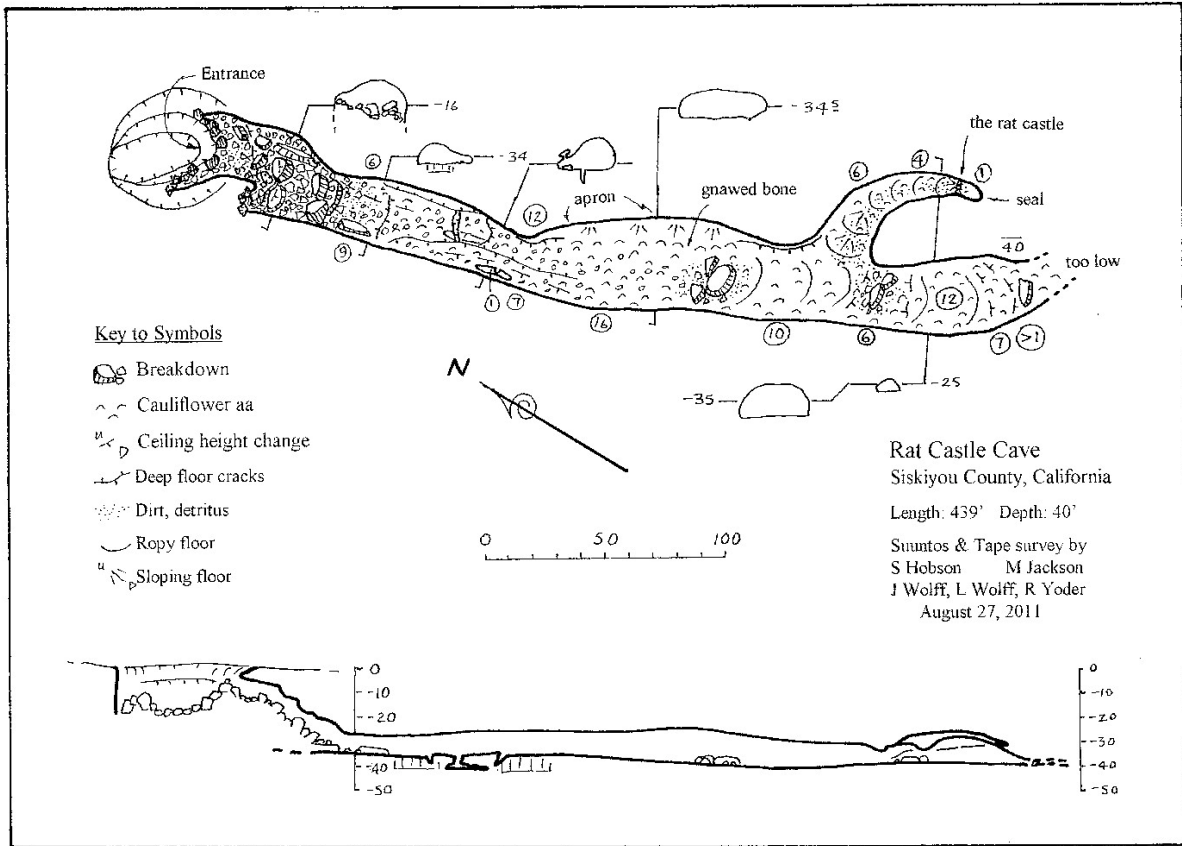
Once on the floor of the cave, deep cracks are encountered going between six and eight feet down. One was wide enough for Mel to climb down into and look under a couple of heaved up floor slabs. There were short passages in both directions, but only one was enterable. The longest floor crack was 85 feet long. Shortly after this a block laying on the floor gave a step up for a look into a chamber between the lining and the wall. The hole was too small to get more than a head into, but the ceiling height in there was between one and two feet high. Altogether this void went for almost 20 feet. The main passage has a cauliflower aa floor with a smooth apron about 10 feet wide and four feet high along one wall.

Looking around for interesting stuff, we found a gnawed bone, probably a deer leg bone, wedged into the aa lava floor. After the pile of breakdown near the bone a short side passage takes off up a steep slope into the passage with the rat castle. The castle is a palisade of pebbles about six to eight inches high stretching across the passage at the top of a mud slope. About four inches of air space is over the palisade. There is passage beyond, but we didn't demolish the rat's castle to gain the eight to ten feet to a lava seal. This passage is well decorated with shark's tooth pendants and soda straws. A couple of "little people" were found on the floor.

Back in the main passage, we continued on to the seeming end of the cave. This passage also had "little people" and many formations. The whole cave had a lot of formations once intact passage was reached. The passage goes from 12 feet high to a foot and then less in a short distance. Disappointing. It probably would have been high enough to continue if it hadn't been for the large cauliflower aa and all the drippy things on the ceiling. We could see 20 feet or more before the cave went around a corner to the left. Altogether the cave totaled 439 feet long and 40 feet deep.

Exiting the cave and hiking back to the cars in the heat we debated hiking the half mile to Bonzai Cave, which also needs to be surveyed. We decided to go to another cave, with a shorter hike, that would be cool and damp. Steve, Mel, Jim & Liz drove to Signal Flag Cave in the far southern reaches of the Water Caves lava flow. We traversed over the breakdown floored cave for a few hundred feet, under a couple of skylights before reaching the final section of cave with the signal flag wedged in the ceiling. The flag is still there, 20-25 years since visiting that cave. Raspberry vines in the entrance sink had been stripped of their berries; bears? Steve and Mel had fun trying to find a continuation in the huge boulders of breakdown that fill the passage at the end of the cave. No luck, they didn't get any further than we did all those years ago when SAG members surveyed the cave. Silver slime coated the ceiling in this section of cave, and edged the signal flag too. Then it was back to McCloud for some more of the lasagna and garlic bread from Friday night's dinner, which had been left from the rescue seminar at the Lava Beds. **LW**





Map: Rat Castle Cave



**THOUGHTS ALONG D WAY**

By Bighorn Broeckel

Once again, it is all Jim's fault. Jim Wolff himself thought of the name for D Way Cave. He called it "D Way PT", or just simply "D Way". In the course of time, any significance or meaning behind this naming has eluded me. I'm not even sure exactly when it was that Jim first got in D Way, or when he came up with the name. However, I would bet that it was on May 30, 2009. On that particular auspicious day, Russ Yoder, Steve Hobson, Wolff and I finished off a cave survey in the bottom of Big Breakdown Cave. Having done that, we were dinking around in another cave that had some accessibility issues. Wolff took a look and decided he didn't really need to go in this one. Then he wandered off and soon found his own cave. That is how SAG first found D Way, and all D blame goes to D caver named Wolff.

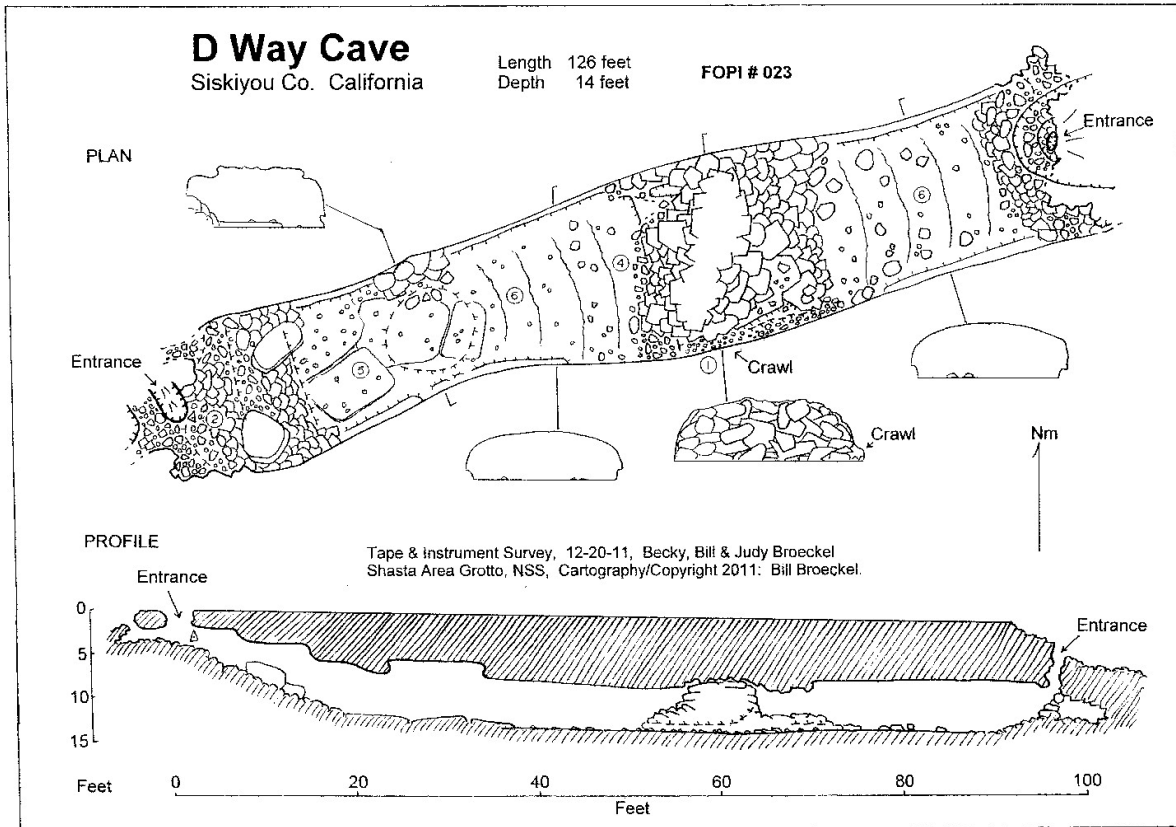
A month later (June 30, 2009), Liz Wolff and I returned to that same area to start a survey in that access-problem-child cave, upper level only. Afterwards we scooped into the west entrance of what we think was Wolff's new cave. To say for sure, we would have to get Jim to show us D Way. From the west entrance, the cave dropped into a nice bit of upper level borehole lava tube. However, it soon ended in a wall of breakdown. There were some dismal leads, but it looked like that was pretty much the end of D Way.

It so languished until Dec. 20, 2011. That was my birthday, and my loving wife and daughter said we could go anywhere I wanted, so naturally I was thinking a cave would be nice. Having already emptied some of my other birthday gifts, I couldn't quite recall where a cave might be, until suddenly I remembered D Way. Becky and Judy were wearing their flannel shirts, so I guess they were not totally surprised about what I wanted to do. We grabbed some caving stuff and snacks, and next thing you know, we were on D Way.

We had some hiking to do, this cave being out of D Way. The survey went quickly from the west entrance to the back wall of breakdown. Becky and Judy were happy to sit there on some flat rocks and chat, while I probed the breakdown. The best bet was in a crawlway along the base of the passage wall on the south side. Before diving in, I pulled a few rocks out of the crawlway, just for appearances. After a few minutes of inching myself over jagged rocks, trying to soften them with cuss words, I was very surprised to find myself emerging from another breakdown wall, a mirror image of the one on the other side of the rockpile, where my birthday cave survey team was still happily conversing together. I could hear them through the rocks. After another short borehole segment, I was gazing up through a small east entrance. The crawl, the segment, the second entrance, this was all new stuff for me. It seemed like a real nice birthday surprise.

Dragging the smart end of the tape along, at least I had some distances on this second half of the cave. Back outside, we did a quick 100-ft entrance-to-entrance surface shot, a depth reading on the east entrance, and we had the whole works fixated for the map. That was definitely D Way to go.

It may well be that SFBC looked at this cave in the 1970s, or Russ Yoder in the 1990s. I never did actually go through that smallish east entrance, but I thought it looked like it might have been dug open at some point. Never-the-less, I would like to thank Jim Wolff, lava tubing since the 1960s, maybe the 1950s, and he continues to lead D Way. **BB**



Map: D Way Cave

*D Way Cave is located in a major cave bearing lava flow in Siskiyou Co. The relatively small entrances and connecting crawlway add extra points to the over-all speleo-feel of the site. This roughly palindromic cave is 126-ft long and 14-ft deep. A complete through trip remains to be done.*



On D Way to D Way Cave, Judy Broeckel and Becky Broeckel stop for a short break at the entrance to Big Breakdown Cave on 12-20-11. Note the very nice and fashionable flannel shirts and woolly hats.

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

**STAMP**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**TO:**

Page 1	Some large lavacicles
Page 2	Calendar and Summary
Page 3	Samwel trip report – H. Stein
Page 4	December Minutes – M. Jackson
Page 6	Wolfe Den – Liz Wolff
Page 8	Rat Castle – Liz Wolff
Page 10	D Way – Bighorn Broeckel

**CREDITS:** Bats and Sally from Bucketheads Cyber Grotto Caving Clip Art.  
 Rat castle illustration by Judy Broeckel.  
 Photos by Bighorn Broeckel.