



**Scott Linn (L) and Steve Knutson (R) enjoy a morning
at Speleocamp {9-3-16}**

**INSIDE – Klamath Mountains Conservation
Taskforce Reports – 2016**

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 \$5 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>>.

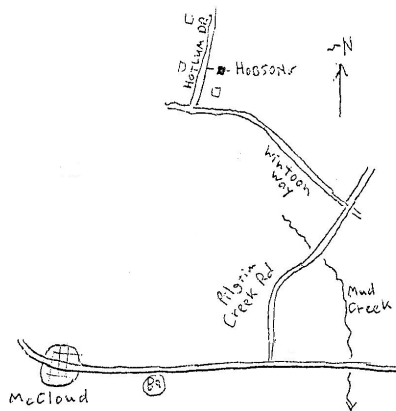
CAVER CALENDAR 2017

Mar 24 SAG Meeting 7:30 pm at Hobson's in McCloud

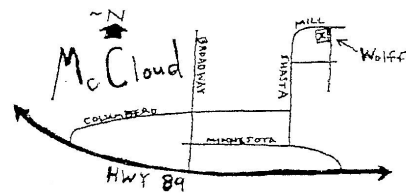
Apr 28 SAG Meeting 7:30 pm at Wolffs' in McCloud

May 13-14 Western Region Speleo-ed, Sequoia

Maps to Meetings



March



April

SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

Here we have some more reports from fun cave times last summer. We are blessed to have regular KMCTF events right here in our backyard year after year, and we can meet up with caving friends, old and new, camping together near the entrances to wonderful caves. Caves with names of nostalgia — Skunk Hollow, Trail Junction, Sinking Stream, and Bigfoot. Caves with less familiarity as well — Sisyphus, Yellow Sink, and Ribbit Pit. Yes, Ribbit Pit — The Cave of the Croaking Frog. Read about all these caves right here in this issue of the SAG RAG. This will finish up the 2016 year of Volume 35 of the SAG RAG. Next issue watch for a Pluto's Cave clean-up report, with some historical features as well. Bruce Rogers just submitted a good lava tube article, so that should also be coming up soon. Cheerios. **BB**

December 2, 2016 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 pm. at Broeckels' in Yreka.

Present were: Bill Broeckel, Joel and Heather Despain, Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Arley Kisling, Dave Smith, Mike Stufflebeam, and Jim & Liz Wolff.

Minutes: October minutes not available.

Treasurer's Report: We have a balance of \$832.

Website and E-RAG: Everything is going smoothly.

SAG RAG Report: Coyote Cave will be in the next issue.

Correspondence:

We have received 2 communications on WNS. Researchers are looking into the fungal load in roosting areas and whether bats are adapting to the pathogen. Bill Halladay reports from Merlin Tuttle that cavers are the first line of defense for locating bats with WNS, and should have wider cave access and support.

Calendar

Jan 27-29	Meeting at Melanie's in Yreka on Friday at 7:30 pm, or at Lava Beds on Saturday if we can arrange for the Research Center to be available.
Feb 24	Meeting at 7:30 pm at Arley's in Weed. Annual Pluto Cave cleanup on Saturday.
March 24	Meeting at 7:30 pm at Steve's in Redding. Limestone caving on Saturday.
April 28	Meeting at 7:30 pm at Wolffs' in McCloud. Saturday caving depending on snow levels.
May 13	SpeleoEd in Sequoia National Park.
May 26	Meeting location TBA.
June 23-25	Hat Creek Campout, meeting 7:30 pm Saturday. Clean-up and survey of Garbage Pit.
June 30-July 4	Marbles and/or Lava Beds weekend.

Old Business:

We need to continue to review our SAG/SAR cave rescue practice, with attention to helping SAR in locating caves from maps and gps coordinates, doing searches, and recognizing and managing cave hazards with patients on litters. SAR personnel are trained in patient packaging, a skill we also need to be able to do well. Because the number of cavers and SAR personnel with training in vertical hauls is small, in years we want to include vertical practice we should plan about 3 weekends ahead of the rescue exercise for adequate training.

Steve Knutson found a dead bat in the Marbles, but it required a 3 month wait to have it checked for WNS. It did not have the fungus. The Marbles have the cold and damp conditions that the fungus requires, but few bats.

Joel is planning additional exploration and surveying In Paul Gibson Cave. Possible dates are June 10-11 if snow is not a problem, and Columbus Day weekend October 7-9.

New Business:

Nominations for 2017 SAG officers are: Chair – Liz Wolff, Vice Chair – Mike Stufflebeam, Secretary – Dave Smith, Treasurer – Steve Hobson. Members can nominate and vote for other (willing) candidates.

Bill, Russ Yoder and Liz are updating cave files, and checking to be sure we are not renaming known caves.

The grotto treasurer has a paid members list if anyone needs it.

Trip Reports:

On the Columbus Day trip to Paul Gibson, Joel was joined by Kip Baumann, Mark Fritzke, Dick LaForge, Heather McDonald, and Linda Van Even. Mark surveyed, finding about 100' of new cave, and opening a 75' extension on the lakes formation with a maze and side passages. The old pool basin was dry, with airflow and schist. After a little digging Kip was the first to get through. They found a big room with a creek. The team completed 2000' of new survey, and also checked surface features near the cave.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Dave Smith, SAG Secretary

DS

Girl Scout Trip to Skunk Hollow By B. Broeckel

July 19, 2016: We promised a Girl Scout Troop from downstate another cave trip, again to Skunk Hollow Cave. As many readers know, this is a 1,000 + foot marble cave way out in the boony-docks, more-or-less amenable to visitation by organized groups of regular, well-behaved people – like, say, maybe – girl scouts! I immediately recruited Judy to help out on this rip-snoot'n cave trip. Judy, being heavily into fit-bitting at that time, actually agreed to the plan. I was busy as heck, but did hospital rounds pre-and-post trip, and talked a retiring neonatologist (age 80 almost) to cover a few hours. "Come on, man, it's the GIRL SCOUTS. It's like a patriotic duty or something". So there we were hiking up the long trail once again, a nice cool morning perfect for hiking and caving. Never mind it's "just Skunk Hollow" with a dozen odd screaming teeny-boppers; it was a good day to be out, and it involved a cave, so no complaining. Also I should mention that Judy herself was once a girl scout, with Santa Barbara Troop 75, affiliated with Tres Condados Girl Scout Council. (Tres Condados means "three counties", just in case you were curious about that).

We met our group at the lower camp a tad late, and immediately ate lunch. Priorities, you know. We wanted to set a good example from the start. While we chomped our sandwiches, the group was chomping at the bit. A lot of them were already wearing their brand new green hardhats with headlamps. Cool beans. We sort of recognized Dan Landon, his daughter Kaelie (age 17), and another adult, Kim, all second-timers, having been on the previous girl scout trip to Skunk Hollow, summer 2011. This time the fearless leaders were Shawn Porter and his wife Pamela. The Girl Scout's names were Savannah, Tiffany, Bekka, Brooklyn, Hannah, Jon Ying, Audry, Julia, Abbey, Mya, Elisa, and Rachel. That makes 19 people total, all headed for the same cave, with the small vertical entrance. No worries, we've done this before. It's just a short little climb. I go in first, shoo away the spiders, and talk the neophytes down, one by one.

Dan Landon stayed out with the dog. The dog's name was Trek, and he was the star. One of the girls had a headache, and decided to stay out with Dan and Star Trek. The rest of us did the usual tour, with stops that we tried to make fun and educational, including questions and answers. The longest stop was creek-side, about 140 feet below the surface. We rested on the beaches, and had time for a few stories. The stream was already running low, and the cave was generally quite dry, probably reflecting recent drought years. With some journaling going on, we were able to hand-out a small pile of mini Skunk Hollow cave maps (Liz Wolff's 1994 pencil draft). This group was really agile, spry, resilient, nice, and everything went smoothly.

Back at camp, the scouts packed up to hike to their next camp spot. Judy and I headed home, wishing we could stay out and camp for a few days, or maybe for the summer. Back in town, I checked on my work, while Judy checked Fit Bit statistics. She logged 13 miles for the day, over 30,000 steps, earned herself a "Trail Shoe" award, and helped out the Girl Scouts, all at the same time – what a woman! Well, you know what I would say. It'd be easier to just buy some cookies.

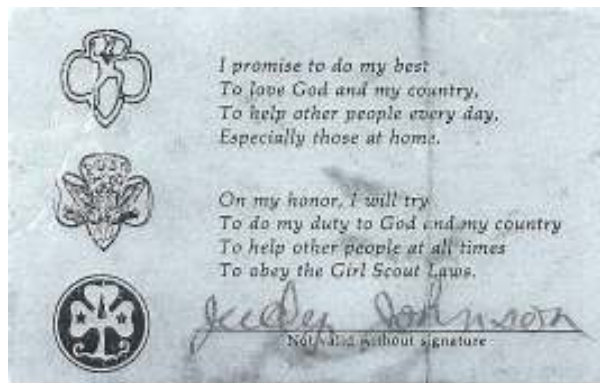
BB



Girl Scout Skunk Hollow Cave group photo {7-19-16}



Map: Skunk Hollow Cave



2016 KMCTF LABOR DAYSPELEOCAMP

Friday–9-2-16: The 42nd annual Klamath Mountains Conservation Task Force (KMCTF) Speleocamp was already underway this last September, 2016. I missed the July event, so I was really excited to be getting back, even though I was late, as usual. Actually, I was days late, but still excited. Luckily, my stuff was mule-packed in for me earlier, and was waiting for me under a tree. Don't worry, the food was in a bear-proof container, and everything was found to be in stable condition. I hiked in after work, and after dark, on Friday, 9-2-16.

Skunk Hollow visits were reported by Scott Linn, Ernie Maier, Mike Stufflebeam, and Dave Smith. Mike and Dave reported that they were lost for some hours in Skunk Hollow. Well then, based on the Skunk Hollow trip alone, Scott and Ernie were given honorary temporary memberships to Shasta Area Grotto. Yeah, we'll take just about anybody who can put up with us.

**Skunk
Hollow**

Another even cooler trip went to Yellow Sink, a little cave with big airflow. Ernie Maier, Mark Fritzke, Larry McTigue, Rob Lewis, and Perry Smith were able to burrow 12 feet deeper into Yellow Sink, with more cave detected below. Keep an eye on this one, because the potential for extensive new passages is tremendous. The going so far has been scary, loose and rough. Unfortunately, on this last trip Larry injured his ankle, and was slowed down for the rest of the camp-out. But that cold wind just keeps a blow'n ...

**Yellow
Sink**

Saturday–9-3-16: We did a horizontal (all invited) trip into the first part of Trail Junction Cave, just for fun. This attracted a good sized group of cavers of various skill levels, including Ernie Maier, Dave Smith, Jim Wolff, Mike Stufflebeam, Barbara Stufflebeam, Dan Mauro, Steve Hobson, Scott Linn, and Bill Broeckel. This was an in-and-back-out trip design, so people could decide for themselves just when they had had enough of the stream crawl, and when they wanted to go back out for lunch in the warm sunshine. Most of the upper level areas of the cave were visited and checked. I think Mike and I went the furthest, but still didn't quite reach the pit. All seems well in Trail Junction Cave, said to be over a mile in length.

**Trail
Junction**

Meanwhile, and of historical significance, Mark Fritzke, Elben and Misha Rejkovicz were busy completing the first ever through trip of Sinking Stream Cave. They started from the vertical back entrance and went out the discovery entrance. The crux of the connection involves a narrow spot, OK for Elben, but injurious to Mark's shoulder. He emerged happy none-the-less. Shoulders can heal, but these Lower Karst connections are forever, and are within the grand scheme of a fully assembled Bigfoot Cave, extending all the way, from the top of the karst and down to the resurgence.

**Sinking
Stream**

Some of the Trail Junction crew went over to Sinking Stream to check on the progress. Misha joined us to locate the main entrance. This took some time, as I started the searching on the wrong cliff band. Eventually we got onto the right cliff and soon reached the exact spot. Misha immediately went in to check on Elben and Mark, from below. Mike, Scott, and Hobson also went in. Feeling tired, I stayed out and waited. Bored, I poked around a bit, and found a cave pack containing a wad of webbing, snickers bars, emergency and repair kit, and power packs.

That was interesting. What else do you really need in a cave with plenty of water? It turned out to be Knutson's pack from the July Speleocamp. Steve removed two dead bats from Sinking Stream at that time, and submitted them for White Nose analysis (they tested negative). With that going on, this little pack was left behind. Knutson was glad to get his pack back. It was a uniquely modified belt pack he had used for a while, and he was sentimental about it.

continued

Everybody came back out the main entrance. Mark and Elben were beaming with happiness, having made the difficult connection and completing the through trip. By way of history, I think the main entrance was spotted by Jim Nieland in 1974. But he was swept away by a busy life, so it was left to Steve Knutson to make the initial exploration, with the cave passage and complexity enlarging as he went. That was on 9-7-74. By 1987, the cave length was up to 3,144 feet. Mark Fritzke found the vertical back entrance in 1989, adding more extent and depth to the cave, especially now that the through trip has been formally completed.

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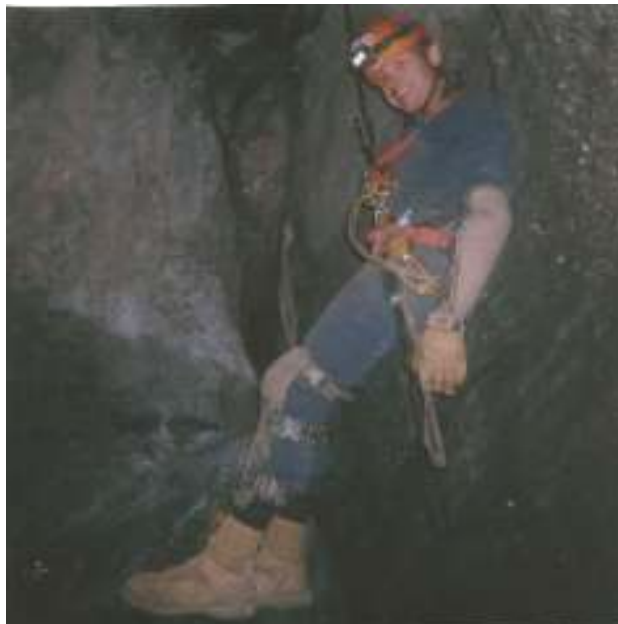
A metamorphic Mark Fritzke materializes at Sinking Stream's lower entrance {9-3-16}

Sunday-9-4-16: Hobson, Mike, and I made a longish hike to an un-surveyed cave near Snowcone Pit. Underneath the small crevice entrance was a nice drop that went down 36 feet to a generously wide landing area. Previously we had looked down to see a snow drift on the floor, but now there was just a small mud pool off to one side. There was a frog in there somewhere, making occasional croaking noises. So we named the cave "Ribbit Pit". I first saw the entrance in July 2006, so it took 10 years to get back on survey. There was a bit of passage, and the length so far is 145 feet. There is also a going lead, which I would describe as ... doable.

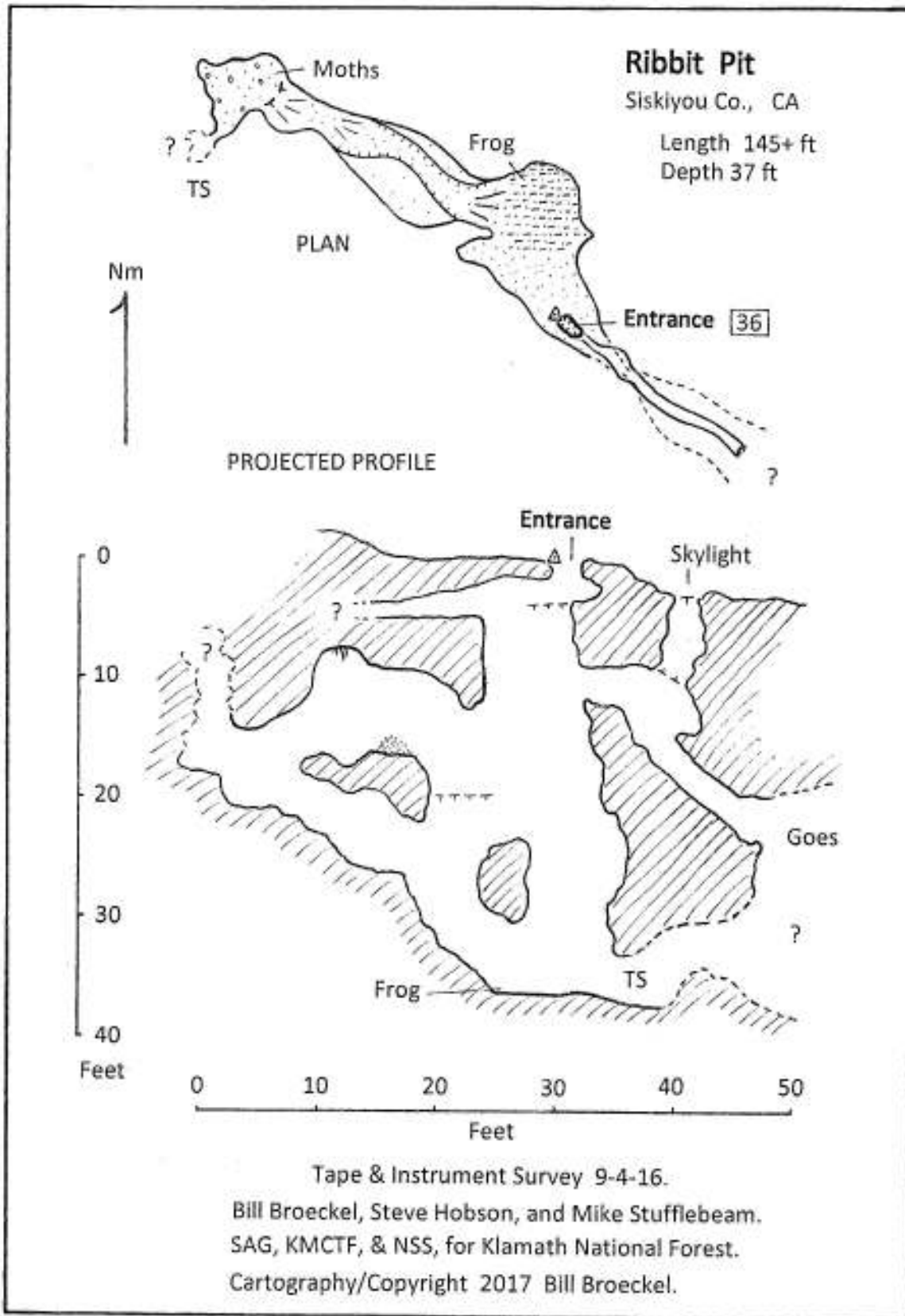
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A happy Hobson rigs the Ribbit Pit entrance {9-4-16}



A marvelous Mike Stufflebeam nears the floor of Ribbit Pit {9-4-16}



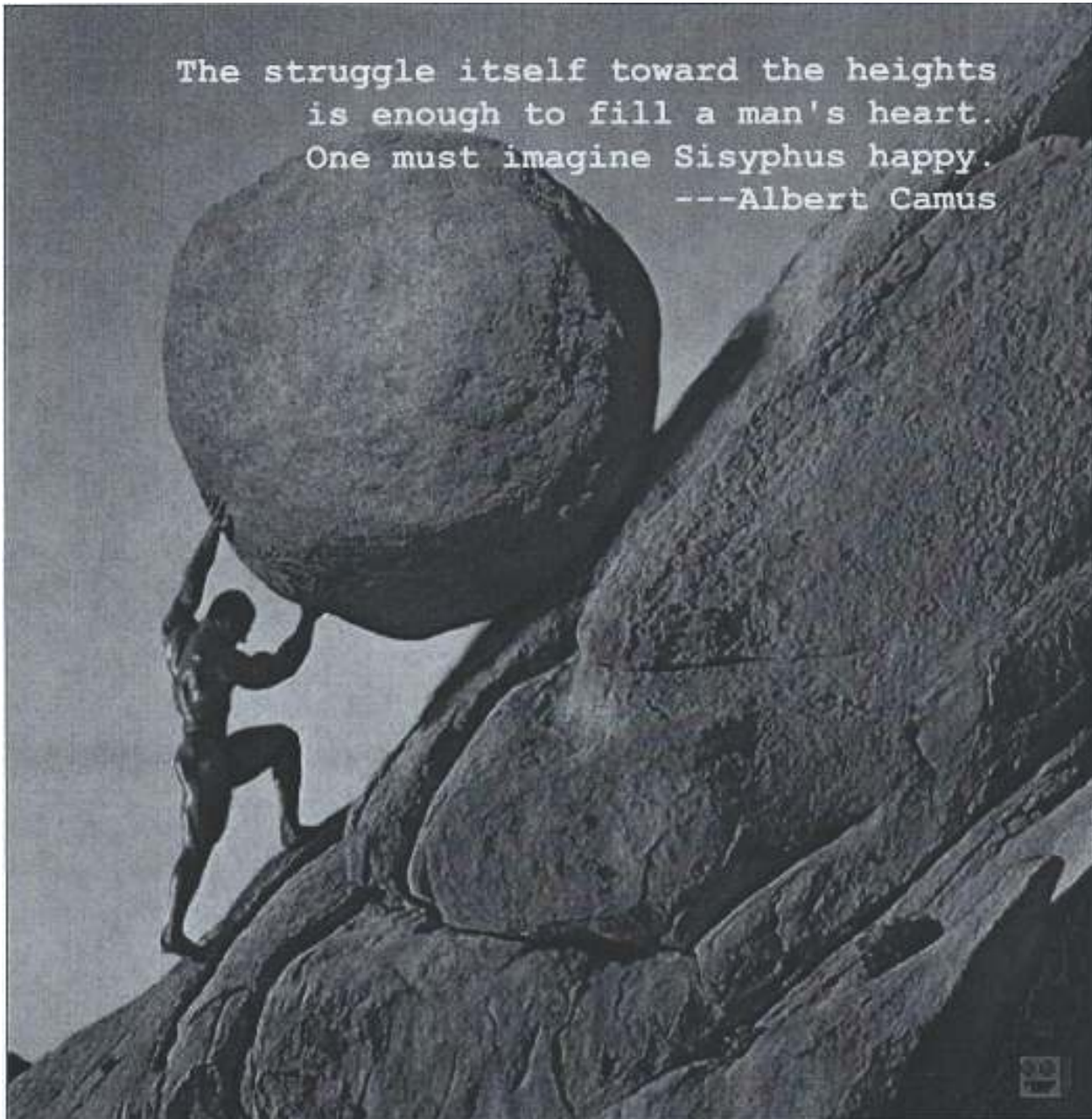
Map: Ribbit Pit Cave



Monday—9-5-16: This was hike out day for me, and for the others using the mule packers. The loads have to be balanced properly. Ken the mule guy had a funny story about using a rock to balance a load. A forest ranger noticed, and hassled him about removing natural materials from the wilderness. (It must have been some real nice rock. I mean, I bring along rocks in my boots every time I hike out, with no problems except sore feet). Ken immediately sized up the situation, and had some choice words to say. Fortunately, common sense prevailed in this case. We all do love our wilderness up here. We went to town for lunch. I had a pastrami sandwich. They left out the cheese slice by accident, but with the locally grown beef and tomato, it was still really good.

continued





Wrap-up: Besides the caves already mentioned here, some other caving trips happened at this Speleocamp. Here are the ones I heard about. #1: Mark Fritzke, Rob Lewis, Perry Smith, Elben and Misha were back in Sisyphus, still lured by the not so distant sounds of running water. #2: Larry McTigue and Steve Knutson did ridgewalking into the next drainage south, looking over some burned areas, with no findings to speak of... #3: There were trips into Bigfoot Cave by Larry McTigue, Rob Lewis, Perry Smith, Jesse Barden, and Josh Hydeman, to re-rig the Discovery Entrance and to do some photo shoots. We enjoyed fair weather, and the forest fire smoke wasn't too bad, creeping up the valleys on some of the afternoons. Next September, the plan is to arrange the mule hauls for more days in Speleocamp; so I guess we liked it OK.

Sisyphus

BB



The ebullient Elben emerges from Sinking Stream's lower entrance {9-3-16}

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STAMP

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