

# sag rag

28:3 May-June 2009



Surface fossil in limestone bedrock near Blockhead Cave 1-31-09

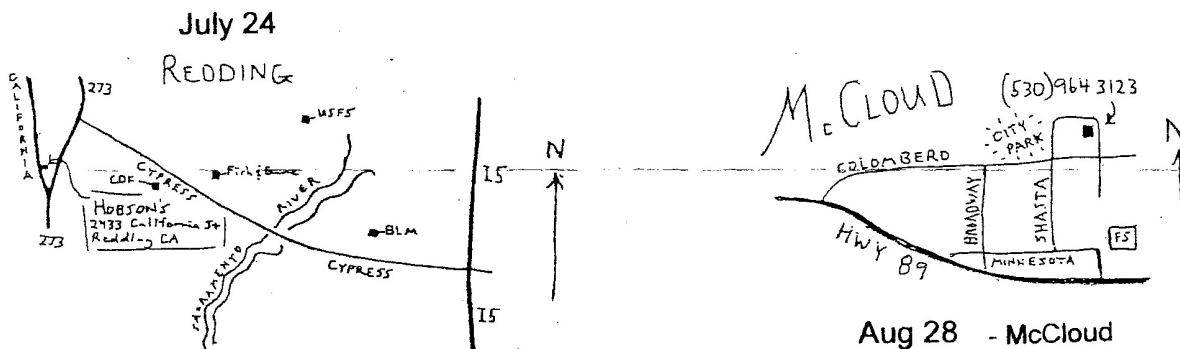
**MORE GROTTTO AND SPONTANEOUS TRIP REPORTS – 2009**

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 2009

July 19-26	NSS Convention in Kerrville, Texas
July 24	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Hobsons in Redding (530) 242-8707
Aug 28	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolffs in McCloud (530) 964-3123
Sept 2-9	Lava Beds CRF. Bruce Rogers, Pat Helton (510) 796-2283
Sept 4-7	Public Lands Day at Saddle Butte with BLM (541) 473-6231
Sept 5-7	KMCTF Speleocamp, contact Bill Broeckel (530) 842-3917
Sept 12-13	Western Regional at Wishon Campground near Kings Canyon
Sept 25	SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Cliffs in Big Bar (530) 623-3242

## MAPS TO MEETINGS



## SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bill Broeckel

This issue features various authors recounting the official grotto trips of March and April of 2009. In March we launched out on the Hobson lake cruiser and had a great day in Lakelevel Cave, where we may return this next trip, after the meeting. Pre-meeting caving may also be available. Just call Steve ahead of time, and let him know you are thinking. On the August grotto trip, we are thinking vertical practice or pit bopping again this year. Call Jim before the trip and find out more details as this date gets closer. The April Lava Beds trip was well-attended and productive, with short caving reports in this issue by Melanie Jackson and Liz Wolff.

That January grotto trip to Jacob David was so good, we did a follow-up trip a week later to a nearby area, and a small new cave was found. The report on that trip is in here too. Wow!, 3 RAGs in a row with new maps of solution caves. No worries, we already have a bunch of lava cave maps waiting for the next publication. All uncredited photos are mine.

**BB**

**SAG MEETING June 26, 2009** Christie Campground @ Eagle Lake

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 8:20 pm

PRESENT WERE: Vern and Linda Clift; Jim and Liz Wolff; Ed and Virginia Bobrow; Russ Yoder; Neils Smith; Dave Smith; Steve Hobson; Arley Kisling; Melanie Jackson

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: not available

TREASURER'S REPORT: not available

CORRESPONDENCE: Kellan Feyerharm – student TN, caver – home Ashland, OR, wants to join SAG. Bill sent SAG RAG and maybe an application.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Website – Dave Smith can put in meeting information and pictures. Now everyone can sign-in and send messages.
- SAG RAG – Bill Broeckel needs trip reports and photos.
- Data Base – Liz says that there are no changes. Liz GPS some more caves.

OLD BUSINESS: Western Regional 2010 – No changes until Liz talks to Shane and CRF – no date yet. Hoping to get Columbus Day weekend (same as CRF weekend).

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- July 24 next meeting Steve Hobson's 7:30pm. On the patio boat during Friday – meeting in Redding, Saturday on boat, stay out, go to Creek or Bus Stop Cave and hunt the limestone! Boat moored at Bridge Bay, \$10 for parking, car pool and share expenses. Can go caving Sunday if anyone wants, Maybe (go to) Lakelevel Cave.
- Aug 28th SAG mtg – at Wolff's in McCloud, rope practice a focus on Saturday.
- Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> SAG mtg at Vern and Linda's, Big Bar – Ridge Cave.
- September 4-7 Labor Day Weekend, National Public Lands Day – Saddle Buttes, SE Oregon – per Ken Siegrist.
- Dave Smith brought Vol 20-28 #2 now on disk – Dave distributed them to grotto members.
- A vertical practice was suggested for the August meeting at Wolff's – meeting Friday 8/28 Vertical practice 8/29.
- Steve H. made a motion asking can the grotto pay for the two group campsites of the June grotto? \$120 for two nights. Motion approved. Steve will pay and reimburse Jim \$60, already paid for one site. Suggested by Vern that next year we have Eagle Lake Campout at Little Antelope Wells free camping – no water, but Vern built a potty there already. It's about four miles from Christie Campground.

**TRIP REPORTS:**

- Bill Broeckel found caves. Russ had found also good caves 900-1000 feet long. One an ice cave – really neat caves. Trip in June two weeks ago. Russ had forgot about them.
- Steve: two weeks ago, Dave, Jim, Brad Rust, Steve and B. Broeckel went out on patio boat – Steve found cave on Creek, found Rock Block Cave at 68ft mapped. Found another cave also – needs to go back and check it further.
- Steve and Jim Dancey looked for a cave called Drill Hole, (mythical cave named Drill Hole).
- Steve H. has key for Samwel Cave, reserved for July 11<sup>th</sup>. Contact Steve.
- Melanie said we need to correct our current email membership list. Eliminate non-members and make sure all others are correct. Send emails for all grotto functions, trips, etc. even if last minute to all current members.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:10 pm

Respectfully submitted

By Melanie Jackson, acting Sec.,

Judy Broeckel was at son's graduation from Navy

**MJ**

**OBITUARY – CLAUDE CHABERT (1939-2009)**

*This obituary comes to us translated from the French and recently circulated through caving list servers. The original source appears to be SPÉLAÏON, a French caving publication, and it was brought to our attention by Richard "Red" Watson. Then the translation was further dispersed by others around the United States. Our kindest thoughts and sympathies are directed to the Chabert Family.*

CLAUDE CHABERT left us yesterday, Monday, May 4th, around 5:30 PM.

For everyone – for him also, no doubt – it is a relief. For five years and perhaps more, Claude underwent attacks of the frightful illness, Alzheimer's disease. Born in 1939, he will not enjoy the pleasant retirement that he had planned. At first, he benefited from periods of remission, but then his condition worsened inexorably. He and his wife Nicky went to Yonne, where, during the last few months, he was hospitalized in a specialized retirement home.

Claude was a professor of philosophy who had become a polyglot during his trips. He traveled principally for speleology, to Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Libya, Indonesia, Borneo, Mexico, Brazil ... I once heard him conversing in Turkish and one of the last times I saw him was at a dinner in his apartment in Paris with a young Brazilian couple, cavers, in which the conversation was almost entirely in Portuguese. From what I could make out Claude was brilliant. Jasmine and I felt a bit excluded, but from time to time, Claude, Nicky, and one of the young cavers translated for us. Alzheimer's had already gripped Claude, but he had some periods of remission such as this.

Claude had been a member of the Spéléo-Club de Paris since 1961 and president of the club from 1975 to 1980. He kept the publication records for our review GROTTES & GOUFFRES. He published on the karst of Yonne and Nièvre. His ATLAS DES GRANDES CAVITÉS MONDIALES, written with Paul Courbon (Peter Bosted and Karen Lindsley were added as authors of the English edition in 1989), is one of the few French speleological publications translated into English. His last work, ATLAS DO JANELÃO, is a work of art, a bit mad, the ultimate witness of his final passion for Brazilian karst.

Claude was an exceptional speleologist, with a passion for both exploration and science, a man who sometimes combined the results of a high intellect with an outrageously wild imagination, a unique individual with a distinctive character of the highest order. Services will be private. Your sympathies can be sent to: Nicky Chabert, 12 rue Carnot, 89310 Niry, France. We hope that Claude's explorations in the hereafter will inspire him to produce a beautiful atlas ...

SPÉLAÏON, Spéléo-Club de Paris

**FOLLOW-UP IN THE STEVE ZONE**

By Bill Broeckel

We were so excited about that January grotto trip to Jacob David (see last SAG RAG), some of us returned for more on the Saturday before the Super Bowl (1-31-09). Late yet again, I parked next to Wolff's truck, and plunged into the brush. This time I actually beat the whole group to Riley's Cave. I spotted the key bit of ribbon marking the spot to begin traversing the cliff. The ribbon was up in a tree twenty years ago; now it was just a faded scrap on the ground. A nice group geared up in the unseasonably warm winter sun. Jim Wolff, Steve Hobson, and Jonathan Golles were the others. Jonathan came with Steve. He is the son of Steve's dentist, Dee Golles, a crazy hiker guy from my old high school days. Small world.

Jim had a notion to remap Riley's, but we were able to talk him out of it. We did check in the 207-ft cave, going in and out the Paintbrush Entrance. We saw some leads, cave spiders, and a bat or two. Nearby is another cave called Critter, which, unlike Riley's, has no finished map. We were ready to take it on, but a bat near the entrance prevented us. There was no way to crawl past the bat without scraping it off the ceiling, so we left it ... for another day, and Critter Cave lived up to its name Bats hanging in crawlways – you don't see that every day. We still hadn't mapped a cave, and now we were running out of caves.

(cont.)



Jonathan Golles unpacks cave gear in the Paintbrush Entrance to Riley's Cave. 1-31-09

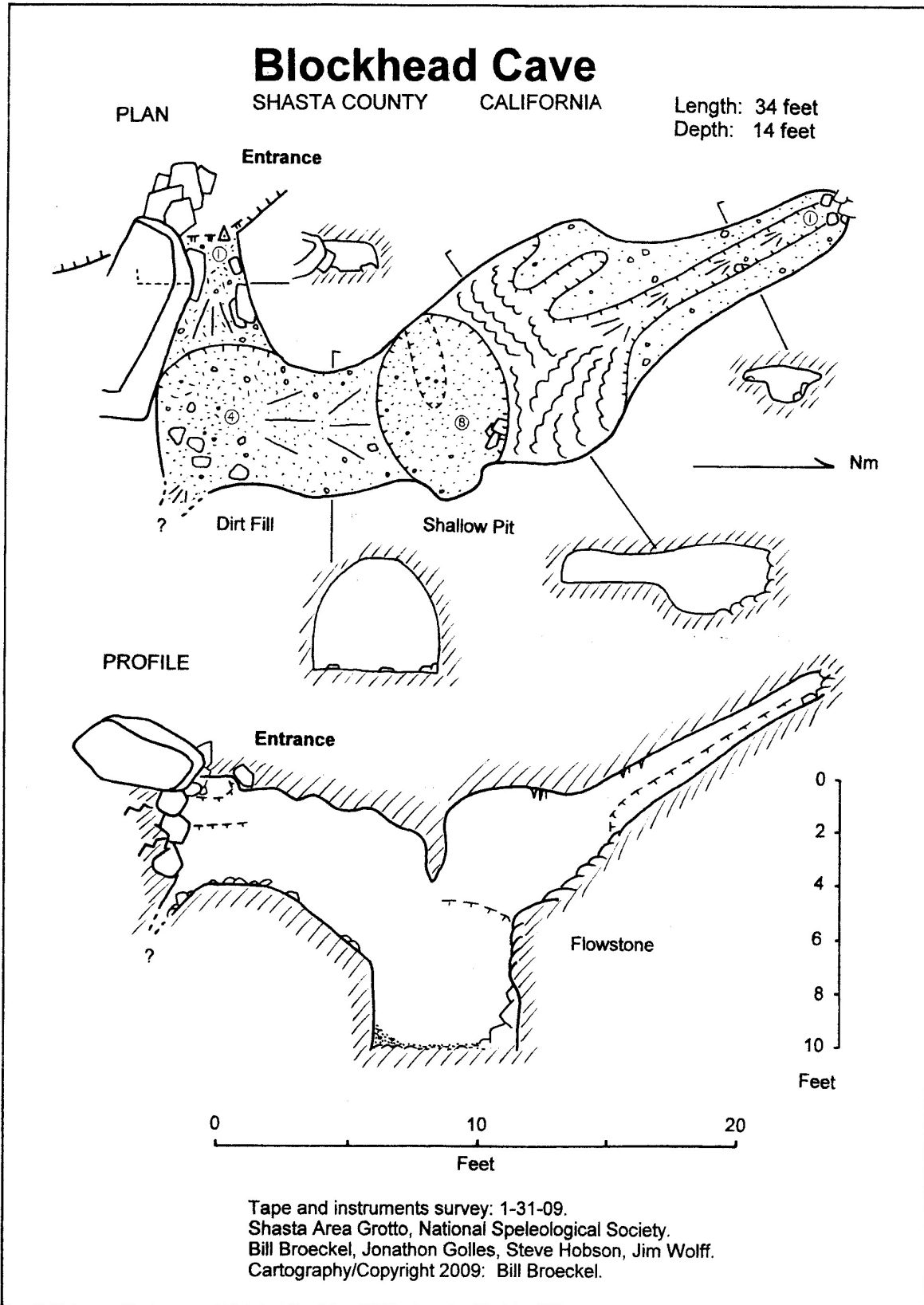
So ... we spread out and started poking around, looking for a new cave. One was actually found, just a little for-the-record-only type of cave. The entrance was on a ledge, and was apparently smashed by a big rock that slipped down from above. There was just enough room to slip around the multi-ton rock. Inside was a small cave, about 30 feet long, and with the possibility of digging for more near the entry. I was there, so decided to survey it on the spot, so as not to have to come back. The entire cave is entirely contained in a huge chunk of rock cracking off of the main body of the cliff. I called it Blockhead Cave, a self-reference I suppose.

April 17: I again found myself in the Steve Zone, hiking back out to Jacob David Cave. I had forgotten to measure the entrance. I found a blooming Shasta Snow Wreath. Years ago Dave Pryor once told me that there were so many salamanders in JD Cave that he couldn't avoid stepping on them. Hobson heard the same story, and he also saw some on the survey trip. It seemed like it might be sally season, so I poked my head in the cave just to check out the amphibian situation. I observed two very nice Shasta Salamanders (*Hydromantes shastae*). I guess Dave didn't step on all of them. Dave also talked about a recluse spider sub-species in these caves, and sure enough, I saw an unpigmented *Loxosceles* not too far from the salamanders. That was enough, and so I headed out, disturbing a bat at the entrance. It flew over my head to hide out deeper in the cave. Somehow, ... I only got a few small dots of poison oak. I plowed through a lot of it, but changed clothes back at the car, and washed my hands.

There is a lot more to do out there in the Steve Zone, and Hobson has the boat afloat this summer. Cavers are needed on Fridays, even weekends, to help Brad Rust and the Shascaders keep it going. Updates soon. **BB**



Entrance to Blockhead Cave. 1-31-09



Map: Blockhead Cave

**LAKELEVEL CAVE**

By Jim Wolff

The day after the grotto meeting (March 28, 2009), we took Steve Hobson's brother's patio boat for a ride across lake to visit Lakelevel Cave. It's been many years since Liz or I had been to the cave, and we wanted to see just what changes had occurred in that time. After a rather quick cruise across the lake, we soon relocated the cave – the vegetation has grown up a bunch since our last visit! Anyway, once we finally got the cable ladder rigged on the short drop into the main part of the cave, we already decided between the two book-keepers, Liz and Bill, who was doing what. I was with Bill, Judy and Dave, going to the back end of known cave, and Liz, Steve and Melanie mapping the very complex entrance area.

Going into the main part of the cave, the drop you go down is just a nuisance drop, maybe eight, ten feet, but it is a struggle going from an entry crawl to a slightly overhanging pitch without much in the way of footholds, and spaces where there is little opportunity to chimney. Funny thing though, I must have free-climbed it originally (of course, I was twenty or more years younger, and crazier too!). Each climber had the option of a belay rope, and most took it after it was seen how difficult the climb was. There is another chimney down-climb, then you are in fairly open passage with large rooms ahead. Lotsa cave to see. The cave is a bit muddy, but drier than I've seen it before. Anyway, the flowstone was wet this day, thankfully.

Proceeding in, Bill and Judy were ahead, and Dave and I took up the rear. I was peeking around a corner and down the last climb-down, and I watched as Dave took a slip/slide down a short slope – he was still standing up at the bottom – but announced that he had twisted his ankle. At this point, he decided to go out of the cave, because he knew that his ankle would start swelling. We chose to go out with him. So on the way out I was below, guiding his good foot into the ladder rungs, or to help find footholds for his bad foot. Yes, I did use my face for his foothold, why do you ask? Once at the top of the ladder I suggested that Dave go soak his foot in the cold water of the lake to reduce the swelling. Apparently that worked well, for as long as he could, he did too!

So, while the mapping of the cave continued, I ate lunch and kept Dave company for awhile that is. After that, since I was near the entrance anyway, I busied myself with helping Liz (and Judy now, since the rest abandoned the entrance room crew), but not until I had a chance to prowl around the entrance area – where there is MUCH more to that part of the cave, than what I remembered mapping ... in fact, there is a new sinkhole that has formed in the last 20 years, so there are three in a tight cluster near the cave's main entrance. Yes, there is another skylight entrance to the cave too, that I wasn't aware of.

So I hooked up with Liz's little survey crew, and Judy did all the work. I helped a little bit by dragging the tape once and giving some estimations of distances, LRUDs and describing what was ahead. In fact, we didn't push on in 2 places because of super unstable areas that would take careful planning. In those sections, the entrance rocky debris is held in there with mud, or static cling! Okay, I made the call not to proceed in these areas. The passages are do-able, but a traverse line as belay would be nice in one place, and the other area should have a belay or something, as opposite walls are too far away to bridge across. Very good leads. Besides, we are returning again to finish mapping the cave...! **JW**





Dave Smith watching for snags in the lake. 3-28-09



Melanie Jackson on Lakelevel survey. 3-29-09

**LAVA BEDS RESTORATION** By Melanie Jackson

This trip to one of the biggest and longest caves at Lava Beds was led by Shane Fryer. Participating were Ed Bobrow, Melanie Jackson, Wayne Cedidla, Jim Wolff, Shawn Thomas, Cyndie Walck, Linda & Vern Cliff, Robert Nixon, and Russ Yoder, mostly members of Shasta Area Grotto. The double through trip checked in at both gated entrances, starting and ending at the upper culvert entrance. Trash was gathered all along the way. Picked up were beer cans, beer bottles, lots of pieces of broken glass, wax, pistachio hulls, peanut shells, sunflower shells, a battery, a broken light, and string (lint stuff). The majority of the trash was found in the Cocoa Pipeline and near the culvert entrance. While picking up trash in the Cocoa Pipeline, we saw many bat bones. While in the cave, Shane also checked for bats in a side passage where they often roost. This was a wonderful cave for all of us to experience. Some of us who may be a tad OCD (obsessive compulsive) would gladly go back with more tweezers and little bags to gather trash. Thank-you, thank-you ... for taking us into this cave on 4-25-09.

Ed. comments: Robert went home right after this trip, but said he had a good time. No J.D. How-weird signs were seen in the cave. Vern found two Mountain Dew cans hiding behind a rock. Virginia Bobrow stayed at the R.C. to cook, clean, watch the place, and monitor the radios. She put her V.I.P. hours in under the category of "administration". All others were under "resource management". We were all V.I.P.s this weekend (volunteers in the parks). Thanks are to Shane Fryer, and also to Bill Devereaux, who helped set up and plan the weekend.

**MJ**

SAG sets out on a great restoration adventure at Lava Beds. 4-25-09

**LAVA BEDS CAVE SURVEY** By Liz Wolff

On April 25, 2009, Bill Broeckel, Dave Smith, and Liz Wolff hiked out to a remote cave near one of the buttes to survey. We set a "0" point as we found no "pin". We surveyed down through the vertical breakdown tube into the red cinder lined ice chamber. At the bottom of the drop is a huge rat midden that varies from 6" to 3' deep. We surveyed along the north overhang into the gigundo-breakdown chamber, doing a loop. We found no continuations. We were glad to get back to the R.C. (Research Center), which we all appreciate. **LW**



Typical pseudokarst landscape at Lava Beds. 4-25-09



Shane Fryer emerges from a Modoc County lava tube. 4-26-09

**AU REVOIR    CLAUDE CHABERT    BON VOYAGE**

Claude Chabert (right) on through trips of Octopus Cave and Bobcat Cave, with local cavers in Siskiyou County, California July 20, 2003. This was the year of the Porterville convention.

**SAG RAG**

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**TO:**