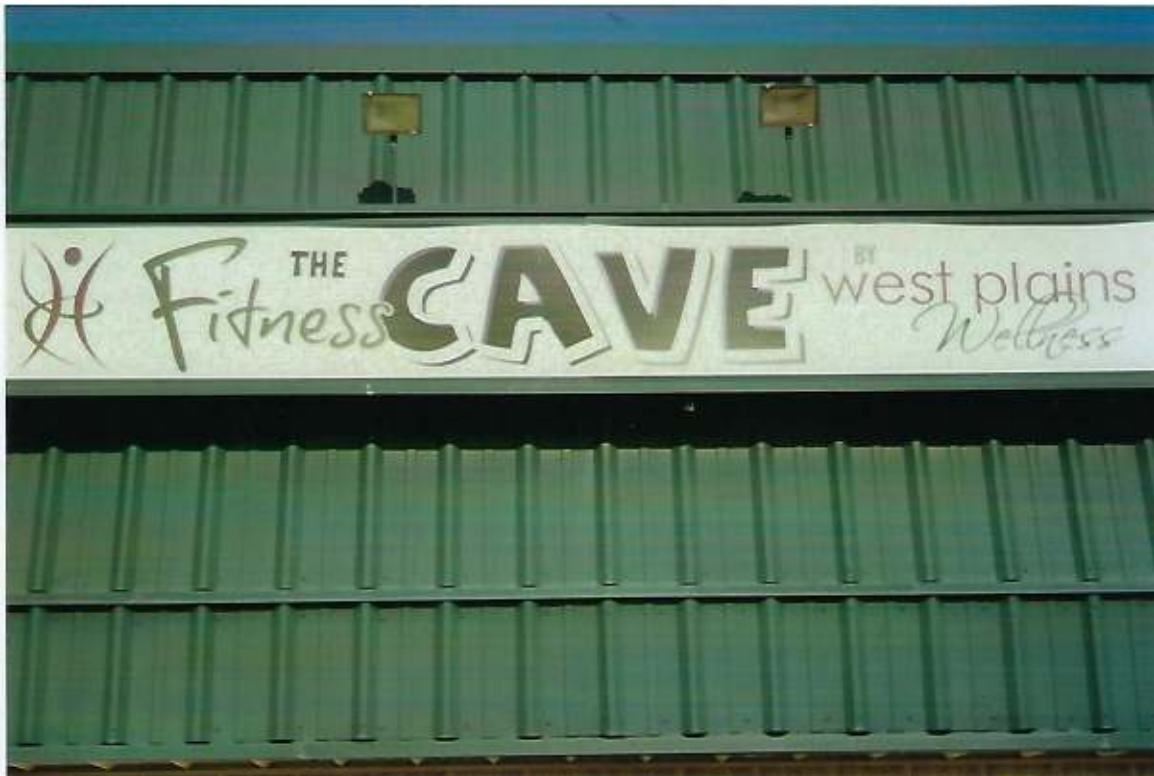


# sag rag

38:6 Nov-Dec 2019



Resolved: To do more fitness caving in 2020.

Inside: LICK CREEK CAVE

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>>.

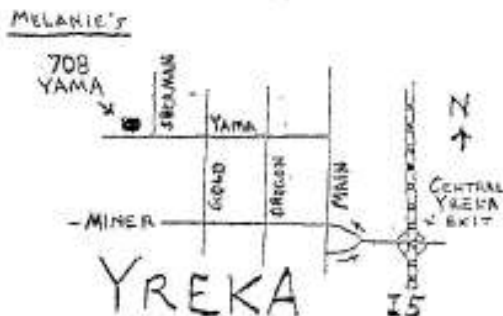
## CAVER CALENDAR 2020

**Jan 24 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Melanie's in Yreka.**

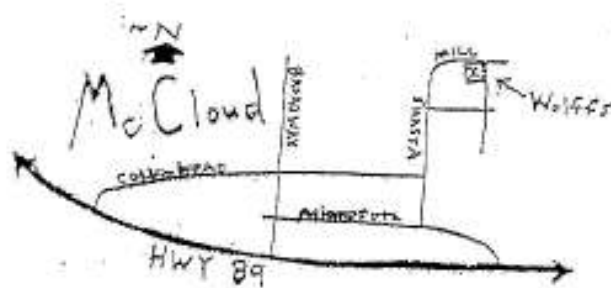
**Feb 28 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolff's in McCloud.**

## Maps to Meetings

**JAN**



**FEB**



## SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

Remember to vote for our 2020 Grotto officers. You have one choice for each office, and we thank each one, both incoming and outgoing, for their willingness to serve. I dredged up an article from 2018 and padded it with extra "form and texture" photos to fill up the RAG. I would like to consider it art, but not everyone would agree. I think this article does catch me up on promised items. Truth is, we could use more submissions of newsletter material. So turn your cave trips into trip reports, with photo illustrations, keep in good shape this year, and eat a Wolff's hamburger if you get a chance. **BB**

[SAG] 2020 officer elections

DS David Smith  
Mon 1-13-2020

Hi everyone,

Here are the nominations for new officers, Please email your votes to me:  
[theootherdavesmith\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:theootherdavesmith[at]gmail.com)

Chair: Steve Hobson  
Vice-Chair: Barbara Schiermeyer (aka Barbara Stufflebeam)  
Secretary: Dave Smith  
Treasurer: Melanie Jackson

You may nominate other persons if you have their consent to run, and I will update-redo that office. I hope to be able to announce the winners (sic) at the **January 24 meeting** at Melanie's.

Thanks, Dave

**DS**



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.

**LICK CREEK CAVE, MONTANA**

By Bighorn Broeckel

This is the other “easy” cave I visited at the 2018 NSS Convention based in Helena, Montana. Readers may recall a previous report on Wagners Cave (SAG RAG 38(3) May-June 2019). Wagners really was an easy cave, but getting to the entrance was a bit difficult.

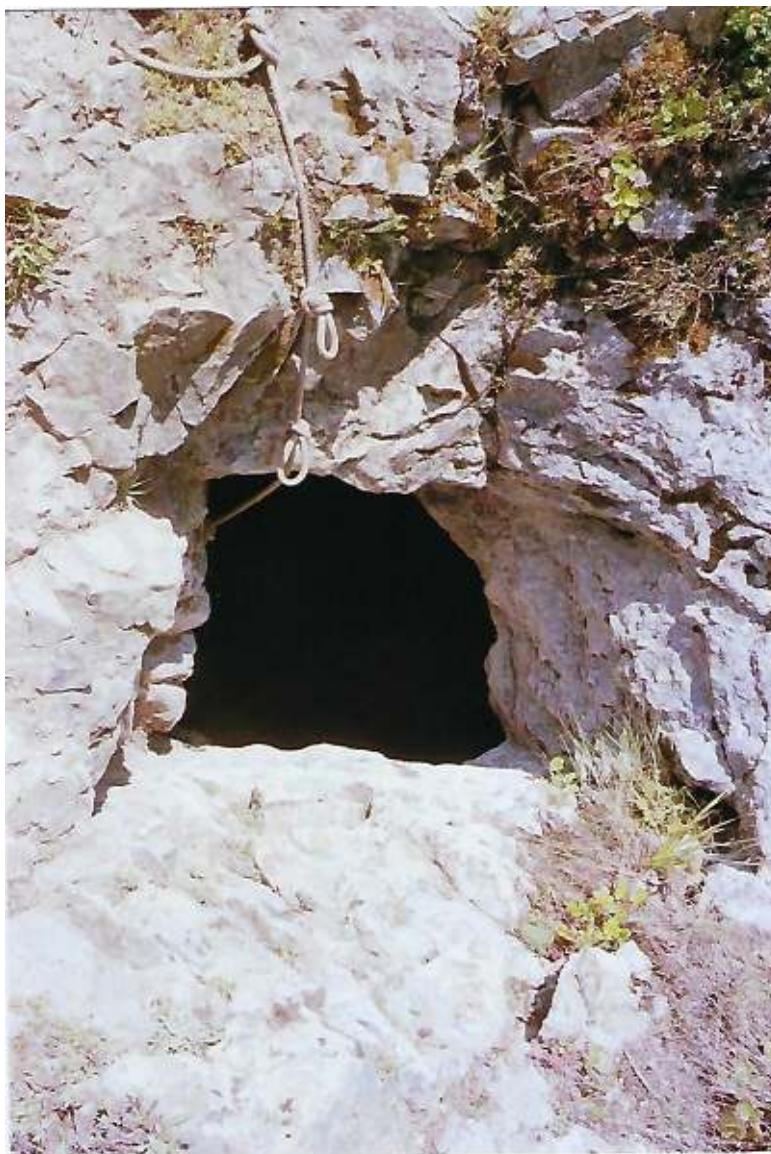
Lick Creek proved just the opposite. A well-established trail led right to the one and only entrance. Inside was a nice big cave, but seemed plenty challenging enough for me. The guidebook gave it a more recently revised length of 4,563-ft, 7 to 8 times longer than Wagners. Also mentioned: estimated visitation is 5,000 people per year, very popular, second only to commercialized Lewis & Clark Caverns for most visited cave in the state. (Bodenhamer et al., Caves and Karst of Western Montana, 2018 Convention Guidebook). So, how hard could it be?

continued



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.





One and only entrance to Lick Creek Cave, Montana. 7-31-18.

Again, we carpoled on an 80 MPH freeway, switched to slightly slower, gravelly roads, and found the start of the trail. Traversing up the graded route, we soon reached the entrance and geared up. So far so good.

The entrance was a modestly smallish pit with a rigged hand-line in place. Once inside, and looking around, this wasn't actually that bad. But it did set a style precedent. Spoiler alert: Lick Creek is really a vertical cave. However, it has been set up to accommodate horizontal caving with strategically placed hand-lines, and one big old, absolutely crucial, wooden ladder.

continued

Right away, one of the strategic hand-lines dropped into a pit on the right. But some of these could be avoided by staying on route. But that was tricky, because the upper part of the cave is a maze. The nice part was that most of it (but not all) was walking passage maze.

After a while, we arrived at the top of a major pit, gaping deep and wide before the toes of our boots. Our route danced around the top of the pit by traversing across a slick and muddy slope. A hand-line appeared running along the base of the side wall above the pit. It wasn't hard to imagine a quick slip down the slippery slope and a plummet into darkness. But never mind, just keep a hold of that line, and focus on balance and the grip of the boot soles. Was I scared, well yes, I admit I was a little scared.

More caving beyond that memorable traverse brought us to the top of a very wet and drippy wooden ladder. This needed to be descended in order to enter the Cathedral Room, which is the holy grail of a trip into Lick Creek Cave. The ladder seemed sturdy enough, but pretty long and that's what got my attention. Going down this I was thinking – maintain three points of contact, steady, rung-by-rung, don't rush it – until arriving on the big rock at the bottom of the ladder. Yes, I know, basic laddering, but still I was a little scared again. Even on the rock at the bottom, you had to be careful.

continued



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.





Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.

At last, down and intact, I relaxed and looked around and saw a huge space. I was at the base of a big mountain of breakdown inside an even vaster chamber. Distant echoes, voices, and lights filtered through the foggy air. The rock here is a reddish breccia, mostly undecorated. However, the over-all dimensions were cathedral-like. We wandered about for an hour or two, just poking around and exploring the big room.

When it was time to head out, we retraced our steps. Going back up, I was less fearful, but made myself pay attention and take care of the important details of travel. Everything went fine, except I got lost in the maze. I ended up at the bottom of that “hand-line to the right” mentioned earlier. I gladly latched on to it for the climb up the pit, and soon popped out onto the surface. So that was it; that was my other “easy” cave trip at the 2018 NSS Convention. The Cathedral Room is said to be the largest cave chamber in the whole great Big Sky State of Montana. **BB**





Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.



Form and texture, Lick Creek Cave. 7-31-18.



Mandatory stop along the road to Montana.

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

**STAMP**

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