



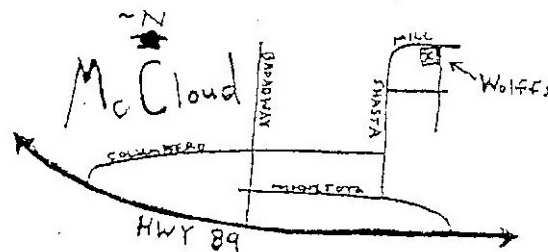
Listen, Doc, I've got to tell you, this pandemic is really starting to interfere with my caving.

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>>.

CAVE CALENDAR 2021

Sat. Feb 27 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolffs in McCloud

Map to Meeting



SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bill Broeckel

Here is the last SAG RAG for 2020, a year that saw many caving events curtailed due to the pandemic, surging in the months of November and December. Less caving means less reports means a slightly shorter than usual newsletter. Save the trees I guess. I hope that everybody is doing OK this winter. The articles we do have ready are offered to encourage folks – local caving has not come to a total stand-still. We have lost some active grotto members, thankfully not directly related to Covid. Many people are feeling isolated or lonely these days. Nevertheless, let us remember that our favorite caves are still out there, waiting for better days and renewed cave related and cave friendly activities. The present situation does offer us some time to step back and reflect on past efforts and accomplishments, and a chance to perhaps make some changes and improvements on the ways we do things going ahead, as this pandemic subsides. I missed the whole year of wilderness caving, my loss, but I was glad to see that some low key, small group trips were undertaken with good focused results, for example, pushing a great new cave. I have not seen much written about caving within a bubble, but Judy and I have kept doing just that. Peace Pipes was the best one. In fact, I would say that outdoor activity in remote natural environments within a small bubble is probably one of the best things we can do these days. Also, thanks to Wolff for his instructive self-critique with lots of good teaching points. Next issue – probably a full stamp's worth of lava tubes.

BB

Aug 29, 2020 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 4:52 p.m. at Medicine Lake Highlands Dry Camp

Present were: Steve Hobson presiding, Bill & Judy Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, CJ & Kit McKinley, Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Russ Yoder and guests Anne Hildebrand and Don Raan, who may join the grotto.

Minutes from the July meeting were accepted as read.

TREASURER'S REPORT: (July balance: \$754.94), Current balance: \$653.94 bank, \$116.00 petty cash, Total: \$769.94.

WEBSITE AND E-RAG: The May-June e-Rag is out, and website calendar has been updated.

SAG RAG REPORT: None.

LISTSERV REPORT: None.

2020 CALENDAR:

- Aug. 28-30 SAG Meeting Sat at 7:30 at Hobson's. Trip planning for Sidebottom Ice, Ice Palace to Lloyd's Ice Rink, Breakdown Chamber to Pillared, possibly S Canyon.
- Sept 4-7 Trip planning for Water Caves, Water Caves Complex & Bridge, Tree Cast Pillar, Dragon's Tongue, JARBL
- Sept 18-20 Trip planning for Sunbeam Pit (vert), Tire Tube (vert), James Brothers, Double Tube.
- Sept. 25-26 SAG Meeting Sat at 7:30 at Steve's; preparations Saturday for SAR cave rescue practice Oct. 10 (tentative).
- Oct. 10 (Sat.) SAG/SAR rescue practice (tentative).
- Oct 16-18 Trip planning for Katelma & Upper Katelma, Rat Castle, Les Martin (vert), Golden Scorpion (vert).
- Oct. 23-25 SAG Meeting Sat at 7:30 at Hat Creek. Trip planning for Mad Hatter, Bob the Boulder, Hat Trick & Kiva area, Sweet Sinkers.
- Dec 4 (1st Fri.) SAG Meeting at Broeckel's, with cookies, officer nominations, 2021 planning.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Bill Hirt will be guiding a geology tour Sept. 11 at 9:00 a.m. at the College of the Siskiyous.
- The Caldwell Fire is out and LABE will be checking caves for damage. Cavers are invited for weekly visits to help through early Oct. The Research Building may not be open. Contact Pat Seiser for information.
- Mike Stufflebeam is recovering from a fall that left him with cracked ribs.

continued

NEW BUSINESS:

- CJ and Kit found a marble box in 3 Level Ice Cave, put there as part of a Great Marble Hunt. Caves are off limits, and there was a little blood in the area indicating that someone had gotten hurt in the cave. They will remove the marble box and notify the group that it is out.
- During the Porcupine Camp weekend, Jim Wolff was part of a group doing a drop into Moss Carpet, but had gear problems and became stuck on the line. Chris Epperson, already in the cave, pretty much ran to the walk-in entrance, where the team had left an exit line, and brought it back to help with the rescue. Chris and Dave helped to secure Jim with the second rope and get him out, with Don Raan, also in the cave, assisting Jim at the lip. Jim uses a Mitchell system, which added complexity. Getting Jim out took about 2 hours, but with a little rest time and food he was OK.
- SAG / SAR Cave rescue practice: Steve is thinking of going to Bobcat, to introduce new SAR members to caving and the types of problems caves raise that aren't seen in surface rescues.

NSS 2021 CONVENTION:

- SAG is self-sufficient on its \$700 cash balance. The NSS will cover costs we have relating to the convention.
- The last trips SAG took part in to prepare guides were to Freudian and Bobcat (Aug 5-6), Water Caves, James Brothers, and Shovel (Aug 8-9), and Hidden Ice, Ice Rink, Sheer Pit and S Canyon (Aug 28-29). Russ spent several days clearing the road for the S Canyon trip.

TRIP REPORTS:

- CJ and Kit took part in the cleanup of Arnold Ice Cave (Bend OR, early Aug), and did additional cleanup at several others. They found impressive ice columns in 3 Level Ice, but also the marble box.
- Jim and Russ were at Man Eatin' Cave, and found a 30 x 20' rat rock garden. Russ and Don looked at Checkout, opened a tube-in-tube lower passage, and put in a cable ladder for a through trip. Jim and Liz have also been through. The cave will need a ladder if it is included on the convention list.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.
David Smith, SAG Secretary

DS

Shasta Area Grotto is an Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society.

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SHASTA AREA GROTTTO

**The Shasta Area Grotto is a conservation organization devoted
To the protection and study of caves and their contents.**

Marbles Trip Report - October 8-13, 2020 by Mark Fritzke

Ethan Donahue set up a trip for October, and I hiked in Thursday to beat the rain expected on Saturday. On Friday I awoke to find Anna Chinchilli, Niles Lathrop and Tiffany Nardico had hiked in the evening. Niles and Tiffany went to Bigfoot for photography, while Anna and I went to Sisyphus. After several forays to the end to dig and haul rock I thought Anna could fit thru a vertical crevice we have been enlarging. Ahead, the slot appeared to empty into an alcove with a helmet-size tube ahead, but was there more? Anna squirmed through the slot on her right side and saw the alcove was actually a branching right turn and the tube ahead was an infeeder. She couldn't get a good look down the passage behind her right shoulder and there still wasn't room to turn around, so she had to back up 15-feet of horizontal tube and another 9-feet up a sharp S-curve, a "dumpster dive in a bowl of marbles" to get to a somersault turn-around pocket. With the hammering, digging and rock hauling, I can only do about 4 laps of this maneuver before I am spent, so it was time to leave it for another day.

Friday evening a storm came in and we had a blustery wet night and morning, but by noon the wind and rain reduced to a drizzle just as Ethan arrived. After more than half an inch of rain I was reluctant to make a brushy hike to Yellowjacket, so we opted to go to Sunbeam to push an upstream lead below the entrance pit. As we hiked up to the entrance and began suiting up a fresh gusting drizzle forced Ethan, Niles, Anna and I to dress quickly and get underground! We took a hammer to the lead and broke off a knob so I squeezed up a narrow canyon and bashed another corner before Niles and I forced an L-shaped slot into a small breakdown chamber. I carefully climbed into a terminal pocket with a tiny stream emitting from a tiny breezy hole; a typical LFAG (Left For Another Generation) lead that won't easily bypass the wet stream crawl in the main passage going upstream.

On Sunday, Niles and Tiffany returned to Bigfoot as Ethan and I went to Yellowjacket. I forgot a tool for digging, so we left gear for the next day and exited. We hiked over the ridge along the Pacific Crest Trail and descended 800-feet into Wooley Creek to Atlantis, a spring I discovered in 1985. We estimated the flow at 30 gallons per minute; very impressive for this record low fall runoff.

On Monday, Niles, Ethan and I made a great team for pushing Yellowjacket. We lined up and passed rocks back 30-feet along our dig, and hours later I succeeded in getting through to the black void ahead! Our passage intersected a 20 X 20 stream passage in schist with a marble ceiling, and we quickly scrambled upstream until it became a tall canyon. Downstream plunged into giant breakdown with voids everywhere, and we explored only 100-feet before leaving it for a survey trip. This is the third and largest stream in the cave, as the cave appears to repeatedly follow strike and intersect streams following the dip. After 6 days of digging we are again following the cave through the mountain toward Atlantis!

Upon our exit, I was disturbed to find folks on the July trip had forgotten or ignored my warnings about an arch formed by unstable blocks and did not follow the safer route I use. These blocks hover over a steep chute we traverse and can't be easily stabilized, and I will have to flag the hazard in the future. If the arch were to collapse, anybody below would be crushed or trapped! Please folks, pay attention to unstable rock! Our safety relies on your awareness and following warnings!

MF

Mossy Carpet Rescue - A Self-Rescue at the Gaping Holes by Jim Wolff

Started out as a good idea, seeing this cave, one of the first we visited, just after coming to Calif. to live and work, besides, the cave was deep and long !

At the convention cave guides camp we had last week, some were going to the Mossy Carpet entrance to Catwalk Cave, and others with caves closer to camp

At the cave, here's what happened to me remember, I'm not prone to self-destructive ways ! just an old man, with memory issues !

You see, I'm a Hypoglycemic, with low blood sugar, which is usually managed by frequent snacks, but it can also mean that if I'm low, I can make wrong decisions, compoundable, it seemed on this trip, as you will soon see !

1st wrong decision was that I wanted to wait and eat when once in the cave – but, it had been several hours since I ate my breakfast of oatmeal with mixed nuts, that served as protein, not a thing more !

2nd was my blunder when David M. checked my rig over, and he asked about that very carabineer that opened on me, just after starting my rappel. I said it was locked – it wasn't. You see, I was confused which 'biner he was talking about as I had several attached to my harness' anchor point.

3rd was a huge blunder, by putting my chest box upside-down ! (no comment , please?)

4th was a HUGE mistake, where I didn't lock-off my rappel correctly, when I discovered the 'biner was part way open, somewhere just after clearing the rocky ledge, into free-hang. Why I didn't wrap the rope over top of the rack first, THEN lock-off below on the open leg of the rack, is beyond me ! I believe I was freaked-out, at seeing the open gate – I didn't think of fetching my prusik slings from my bag, or using my third ascender at my side !

Anyway, I was in big trouble on rope – my rack's 'biner was open, and my rack was locked off wrongly , and I couldn't seem to get more upright – and getting tired quickly !

continued

Below, action was being taken Chris, who at the bottom, went for extra rope and gear. He would have to go thru the big cave! past all skylights and exit at the Walk-In Entrance! then go the 1/2 mile overland to truck to get more rope and gear! then almost 1/2 mi to the rescue. He did it in a flash! Meanwhile, Vandy kept encouraging us from below, during all the ensuing action !

Don climbed up the rope to my side to try everything he could to get my weight off that rack, to free up the rope.

I don't have upper-body strength and barely passable stamina, and with the chest box upside-down , well, keep reading !

What happened was another rope was lowered down by Chris, I was attached to it, and hauled me bodily out, with me just rolling on the rock beyond the lip of the sink, like some jellyfish ! I was exhausted, but safe!

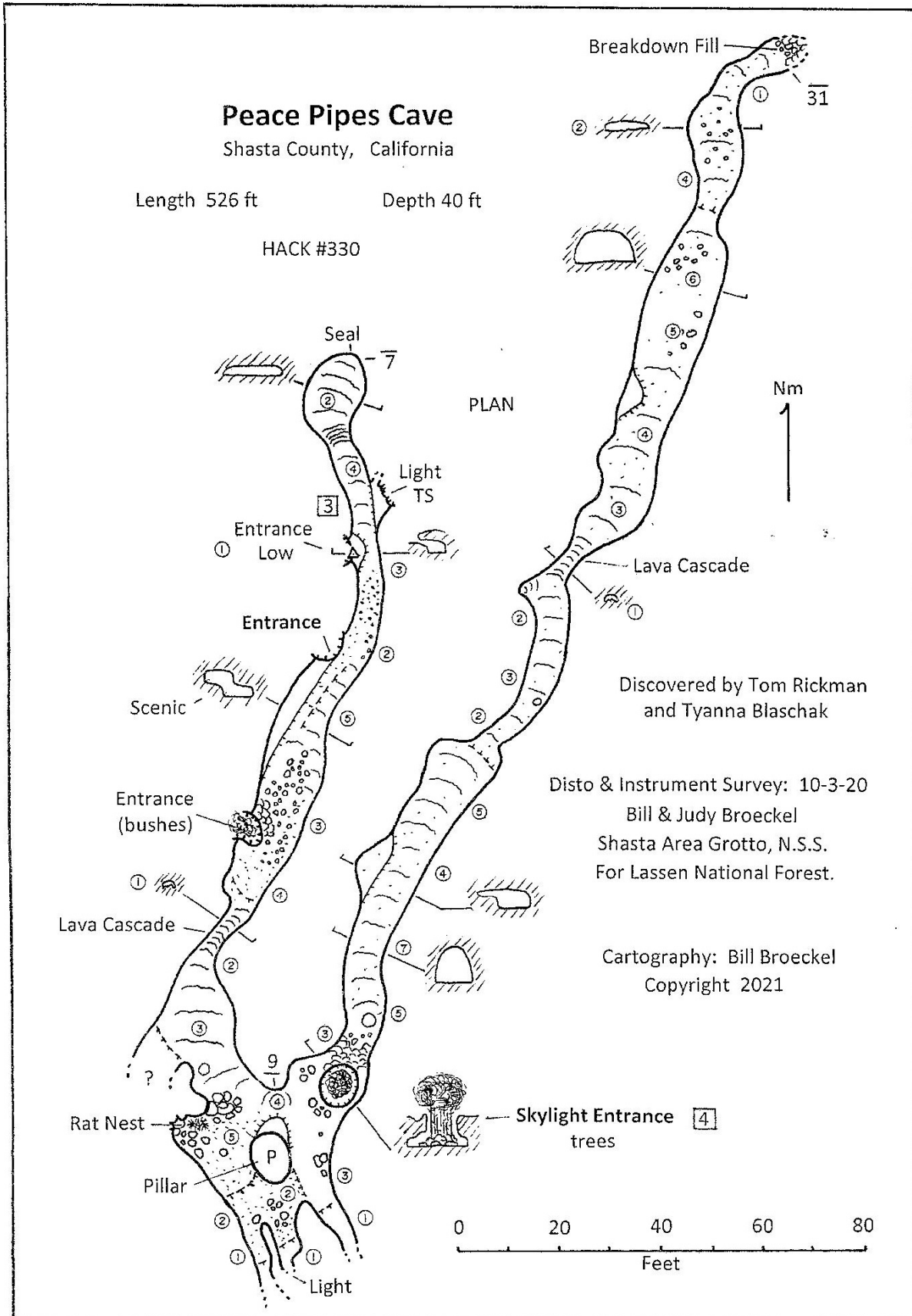
Meanwhile, Arley had taken action for a call-out rescue – he finally found cell coverage several miles away, and called the Sheriff, who initially started this as a medical extraction. He was saying that he was told later that there were already a couple of SAR members in the vicinity – but, relatively soon, he was told that the self-rescue was already successful – so he called-off the Country Rescue order !

I am still humbled and humiliated by this event in my life – something I don't want to see happen again, to me, to anyone ... !

So here's what I've learned personally from this “adventure” hopefully we all can learn from this, self-rescue !

Practice your vertical skills as often as possible, each year ! Do all kinds of basic “tricks”, like change-over, passing a knot a re-belay, etc. ! In fact, practice tying knots that are commonly used in caving it's all fun, and necessary ! Get involved with grotto and elsewhere in cave rescue since you never know, you might take part in a REAL rescue, of a friend, not a stranger – and, you certainly don't want this to turn out badly! do you ?

Triple-check your rigging, before getting on rope ! Know your equipment; and the simpler-the-better set-up, and likely the safer ! Know yourself, when caving, and don't be afraid to mention to others, anything that might affect the success of the caving trip.



Map: Peace Pipes Cave

Peace Pipes Cave

Bill & Judy Broeckel

SHASTA COUNTY 2020: Peace Pipes is the best yet in a new cave corner pioneered by Tom Rickman and Tyanna Blaschak a few years ago. The location is defended by bands of rough lava and slopes of brushy thickets. In the case of Peace Pipes, despite its four entrances and two light leaks, you could easily walk right over it and never know it was there.

On 10-3-20 we were still plunging the brush when it got dark. Determined to find a cave, we kept going, and finally stepped into a hole (cave hunting by feel). Worming in on a small ledge, we dropped into a nice little tube 3-ft high and immediately started a survey. The cave curved off in both directions, upflow and downflow. We picked upflow, and right away found a better entrance. In fact, it was the best entrance, and it quickly became our favorite for getting in and out of the cave.

We kept going through a scenic area with offset passage, flow lines and lavacicles. A 3rd entrance was completely blocked up with bushes. Next came a small hole, actually a very steep crawlway with an original A'a lava cascade coming down. The rough surface of the cascade provided good handholds and footholds for working up through the crawl.

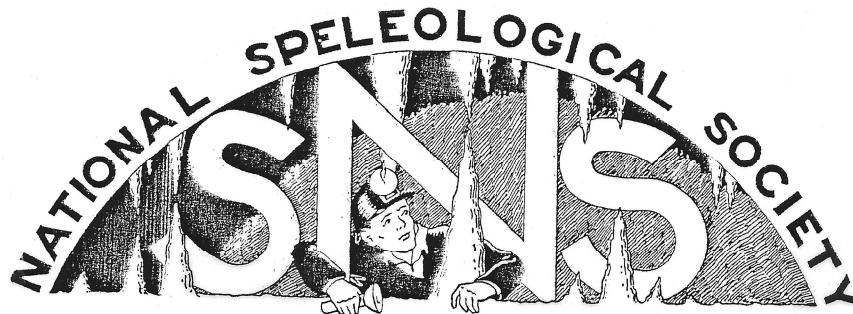
Now we entered a broader area where we crossed a strange divide. This turned out to be a distributary point, where the cave diverged into two passages, allowing us to enter the larger tube on the other side. About now, the 4th and largest entrance showed up. This climbable skylight entrance was full up with small broadleaf trees (poplar?), and so was well camouflaged on the surface, and nearly impenetrable. We managed to work around the side of many tree trunks and low branches, and scrambled down a rocky slope to see a nice tubular passage up to 7-ft high heading down. Next, the tube got crawly, then reached another steep lava cascade very similar to the one previously described. Beyond that, the cave kept going, up to 6-ft tall, before finally getting very low and ending in a sudden breakdown fill.

By now it was getting late, but we still has two remaining leads needed to complete the survey: 1. Upflow from the divide, and 2. Downflow from our starting point. These proved to be not much trouble. Number (1) involved three quick pinch-outs, probably due to some major collapse feature up ahead. Number (2) went three easy shots into a low terminal room ending at a very clean, definitive, "this-is-the-end", midnight lava seal. We were done.

Often when a lava tube branches in distribution, there is a larger lower side and a higher smaller side. Many times the upper branch can also be more scenic and decorated. Much of Peace Pipes is completely unbroken and free of breakdown. The whole cave is shaped like a wishbone, and we are sure my older brother could easily discern the sturdy and strong side of the wishbone. He always could do so when we were kids at Turkey Time, and he would get the wish year after year. But that was a long time ago now.

continued

Peace Pipes Cave has a final total passage length of 526-ft and a depth of 40-ft. The risk for viral transmission in the process of exploring and mapping this cave was very low. We entered a cave unknown to almost all modern man, one that sees human visitors at intervals of many years, if at all. That is in fact, the coolest thing about caving, how it allows a person to enter geologic time, if however briefly, and something like a pandemic becomes nothing more than the blink of an eye. Still, be careful, safe, and analytical at all times.



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STAMP

TO:

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