

Come-back kid – Melanie Jackson

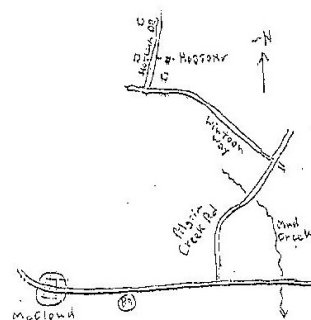
Photo by Breanna Kisling

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

Map to Meeting

June 26 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Hobson's in McCloud
maybe as part of dry camp in Medicine Lake Highlands
June 21-26. Check with more current announcements.



SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

This issue features Grotto cave exploration brought to us by our very own Breanna Kisling, Arley's daughter and poster child for a younger generation actively caving. Thank-you Breanna for submitting this article including illustrative photos. Efforts to clean-up the huge mess down on the floor of Sunbeam Pit are also brought to light in this issue. Thank-you to everyone involved. I couldn't resist adding in a couple new cave maps of associated caves. Especially in Lucky Logger Cave, I suspect that the vertical component to the surface tube has something to do with the nearby portion of bigger, deeper tube represented by Sunbeam, perhaps some kind of surge and backflow event.

Even though the Earth Day work day item already happened out at Pluto's Cave, I put in the blurb anyway, and would also note that it did indeed happen, and much like the bat walks at Barnum Cave, seemed to attract lots of attention and participation from the general public. It reminded me of the Under Earth Day work bees we were having in the not too distant past. Our own inclination toward service cave trips has been taken up by the disaster site at Sunbeam, so it is good to know that other groups have taken up the slack at Pluto's. For a while there, our Grotto was doing a Pluto's trash-pick every winter.

Pandemic-wise, it appears that the vaccine program is turning the tide. However, I think the recovery process will be just as chaotic as everything else that has to do with Covid-19. I'm looking forward to getting back to more normal caving patterns, and I'm interested to see what that will actually look like. I guess I'm a little nervous about myself, that I actually like social distance in some ways. I'm the only one who feels like that?

BB

January 23, 2021 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm. at Melanie's in Yreka.

Present were: Steve Hobson presiding, Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, Breanna Kisling, Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff.

Minutes from the August 29, 2020 meeting were accepted as read.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The current bank balance is \$573.94, plus \$116 petty cash = \$689.94. The October checking balance was 653.94. \$20 in dues was deposited and \$100 withdrawn for the Western Cave Conservancy.

WEBSITE AND E-RAG: Website cannot be updated; The Sept-Oct Sag Rag and E-Rag have gone out.

SAG RAG REPORT: Bill is working on the Nov.-Dec. issue.

LISTSERV REPORT: None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Steve received a letter from BLM on forgotten caves. Steve thanked them for including us.

2021 SAG CALENDAR (We are holding to "safe houses" for now, and not planning past June):

Sat. Feb 27	Wolffs
Sat. March 27	Steve's
Sat. Apr 24	Melanie's
Sat. May 22	Lavas, maybe camping
Sat. June 26	Possibly Steve's, depending on the convention (Mon. June 28 – Friday July 2 if it is held in Weed as planned)

OLD BUSINESS

2021 officers are Steve Hobson-Chair, Jim Wolff-Vice Chair, Dave Smith-Secretary, and Melanie Jackson-Treasurer. Votes were unanimous apart from 1 vote for me (Dave) for Vice Chair.

NEW BUSINESS

SAG Covid Policy: We haven't required masks at meetings. Anyone wanting to wear one can. Double masks earn higher marks for user protection than single masks, especially with new strains of the virus showing up.

We ask everyone to stay home if they have any Covid symptoms or suspicions of symptoms, or family members do, or if they have been in high risk areas recently, or they are unvaccinated and have any contact with people who may have the virus. Anything else that might have you thinking to stay home, do it. Here is Steve's list, he goes for plain English:

continued

1. If you have health concerns I.E. co-morbidities don't come.
2. If you or someone in your family has similar issues, don't come.
3. If you want to wear a mask do so. No one will be critical of you.
4. If you have been exposed, don't come.
5. If you have been someplace with a problem, don't come.
6. If you have any other concerns, don't come.
7. Otherwise the meetings will go on.

We've been practicing these safeguards since Covid began spreading, and have had no issues.

Those of you who stay home can email me (theootherdavesmith@gmail.com) with any subject matter you would like the meeting to take up. I will follow-up with feedback, like this note on the January meeting. Steve will try to get meeting agenda items posted ahead of time for your input. We won't be using Zoom to bring people at home into the meetings. My limited experience with it has simply been too sterile, and Steve's internet reception isn't up to the task. Hopefully by late summer things will be better, even with millions of people still at risk and putting other people at risk.

NSS ANNUAL CONVENTION

Everyone attending the convention or leading guided cave trips needs to register with the NSS.

The drop dead date for cancelling the convention is the end of April, with a backup date (= later drop dead date) for moving the convention to late July, and a replacement date about 4 years from now.

We have advised the NSS that those of us in SAG and in other grottos who are planning to host cave trips during the convention need an earlier drop date, particularly where their employers have to approve vacation time. Moving the convention to July is also a poor option, due both to July heat in the areas we cave and to the earlier fire seasons we are seeing. We will post everyone when we hear something. (Oh, we are also not enthusiastic about bringing the convention here in 3 years. SAG has leadership changes ahead, and those need to precede major commitments.)

TRIP REPORTS

Steve has been to APC. Trails are gone due to last year's fire.

Meeting attendees spent the day mapping Pluto's Cave. It is mostly done, with a few pieces left to do when we have a chance.

Bill is looking at small caves in the Hat Creek area.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

David Smith, SAG Secretary

DS

EARTH DAY AT A GLANCE

Pluto's Cave clean up

SISKIYOU COUNTY - In honor of Earth Day, KS Wild and the Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center are hosting a clean-up of Pluto's Cave area. Held April 23 from 4 to 7 p.m. the group will clean up the parking area, picnic area, along the trail, and the cave itself. COVID-19 protocols will be followed. Further information will be provided upon registration. Visit <https://mountshastae-cology.org/volunteer-opportunities/> to sign up.

March 27, 2021 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm. at Wolffs' in McCloud.

Present were: Steve Hobson presiding, new members Sharon and Thorne Bertrand, Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, Arley and Breanna Kisling, Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff.

Minutes from the February 27 2021 meeting were accepted as read.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The current bank balance is bank: \$ 654.94; petty cash:\$116.00; total: \$770.94.

WEBSITE AND E-RAG: website is still static. Thorne will work with Dave to upgrade it.

SAG RAG REPORT: The next issue will have the new Pluto's map.

LISTSERV REPORT: Liz will work with Doug to update our contact list, and to check it against printed and email SAG RAG lists.

2021 SAG CALENDAR (Meetings are 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, with caving activities earlier in the day and sometimes Sunday)

Sat. March 27 Wolffs' in McCloud.

Sat. Apr 24-25 Steve's in McCloud. We will be cleaning Sunbeam Pit Saturday and Sunday. Contact Liz or Steve to sleep over on Friday so we can start early Saturday.

Sat. May 22 Lavas, maybe camping

Sat. June 26 Possible cave week June 21-26 with camping at Dry Camp.

Sat. July 24 TBD

Sat Aug 28 TBD

Sat. Sept 25 Steve's; Preparation for SAG/SAR rescue practice

Sat Oct 9 Possible SAG/SAR practice, possibly at Pluto's.

Sat Oct 23 TBD

Sat Dec 4 TBD

OLD BUSINESS

We received a new email on Volcano from Mary Anne Russo. SAG is sending \$100 per year for the next 3 years to help cover the purchase of the reserve. The first contribution went out last month.

We will try to schedule the Sunbeam Cleanup for the April meeting weekend.

NEW BUSINESS

Kit and CJ asked about the possibility of planning caving activities for the period June 26 – early July since several cavers have set the week aside for the (cancelled) NSS convention. We will likely set up Dry Camp for that entire week for anyone who can come.

continued

The NSS Convention has been rescheduled for 2024. We are looking into video cave tours for a virtual convention this year. Thorne, and Josh Hydemann and Brent McGregor (Oregon) may be able to handle the video for selected caves with assistance on lighting.

The NSS International Congress is being postponed until next year.

The NSS is discontinuing the printed Members Manual. It will presumably be accessible on line but we do not have details.

The Ely Nevada district of the BLM has requested support from area grottos for its planning activities. Jim is handling communications with them. Jim is also in contact with the BLM in Lakeview OR on cave issues.

TRIP REPORTS

Today: before the meeting we spent the day checking, doing cleanup, and doing vertical practice in caves near McCloud. One cave near the lake has a submerged entrance that could not be checked as the lake is coming up.

Bill and Judy surveyed 2 small caves in the Sunbeam Pit area.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.

David Smith, SAG Secretary

DS

Lava Bed National Park announces which caves are open, closed

This Thursday, Lava Beds National Monument park staff will have completed the annual spring change in cave closures. Permanent staff and volunteers are opening caves used during the winter by hibernating bats and closing caves that will be used in the summer by maternity colonies raising the next generation of bats.

As of this date, the following caves are now open:

- Juniper - Hercules Leg Cave

- Labyrinth - Lava Brook Cave

• Thunderbolt Cave:
Northern portion connecting to Labyrinth - Lava Brook Cave

- Sentinel Cave
- Sunshine Cave

To accommodate bats tending to their babies, the following caves are closed:

- Balcony Cave and Balcony Chamber
- Blue Grotto Cave
- Natural Bridge

- Ovis/Paradise Alleys

The closed caves are marked with closure signs, and the park asks the public to observe these closures and not to disturb the bats.

Furthermore, the wildfire that swept through Lava Beds last July burned a large portion of the park, including the Cave Loop area. Stay out of the burned area and closed trails and stay on established trails where they are marked as open.

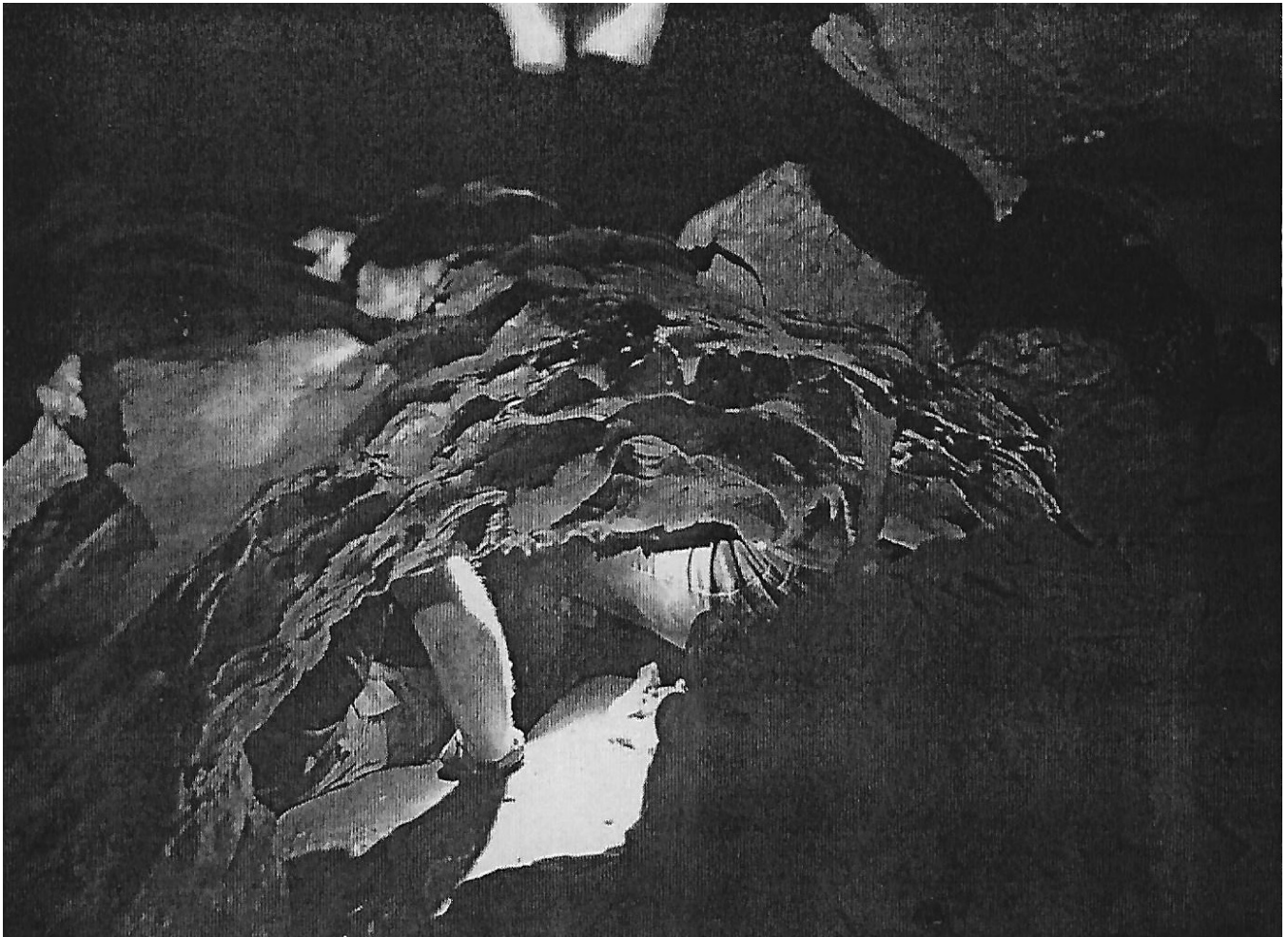


Photo by Breanna Kisling

CAVE TRIP 3-27-21 By Breanna Kisling

On 3-27-21 Steve, Myself, Mel, Arley, Spencer Haggard, and Jim rappelled into Battle Creek Cave. The vertical drop is roughly 25 to 30 ft. Someone before us did tie a single hanging rope which was clearly unsafe, and left trash. On the floor of the cave, and to the right side, Mel, Myself, and Spencer crawled in a small hole. The hole starts out as a tight squeeze and then opens up into a small sitting room for about one person. The hole then becomes a tight squeeze again, crawling through a puddle and mud, and eventually opening up to a small sitting room for two people. At this point we crawled about 40 ft. The hole then drops about 10 ft. or more which required some rope. We ended up not going down the drop and decided to turn around. In the hole were lots of alcoves revealing small stalagmites. Attached are images of the cave and a rough outline of the cave. This is a cave we need to survey. **BK**

SUNBEAM PIT CLEAN-UP and TWO LITTLE SURFACE TUBES Bill Broeckel

"Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, to live for Him each day,

Church song for age 5

Clean-up

Sunbeam Pit has been on the SAG radar lately. Here a perpetrator of unknown identity committed an egregious violation of Federal Law by dumping a large amount of building debris and household garbage down the 61-ft pit. Judging by the sheer mass of the debris, it may have taken several trips. Yeah, no kidding.

Of course, this opportunity for major cave vandalism did not come out of nowhere. It came on the heels of another previous crime against the same cave by the entities responsible for building the road providing vehicular access to the very edge of the pit. For some reason, people will go to a lot of trouble to drive up to a cave and throw trash down into a hole. We have seen the same thing happen in Shasta County's Garbage Pit and Siskiyou County's Adams Homestead Cave.

SAG became aware of all this last year, I think, when cavers came by and noticed some traces of weathered dry wall on the ledge at the edge of Sunbeam Pit. This did not bode well for the cave. Trouble was suspected, but the full extent was not realized until October 17, 2020. Cavers rose up to a challenge, and scheduled a day to check the situation and initiate clean-up. 16 people turned out and divided themselves into four teams. Team 1 entered the cave, dropping down the pit. Team 2, also on rope, stayed at the edge of the pit. A haul team was organized and stayed on the surface as Team 3. Team 4, spectators in camp chairs, were responsible for sniping, critical commentary, and "philosophy". I was pretty much Team 4.

Team 1 soon reported, by radio, on the sheer mass of the material, and the presence of salamanders. We proceeded to remove a large amount trash up and out, watching out for salamanders. Most of the lighter and looser portion was removed. However, the estimate was that the day's work accomplished less than half of the total. Still, two trailer loads were hauled away.

The next follow-up event was April 24, 2021, 18 people this time, and not exactly the same ones. This time we also had two forest biologists, and two law enforcement officers. This was, after all, a crime scene. The set-up was essentially the same, with some improvements. Shovels were used to dig into the disintegrating mass. The wench was positioned so as to haul loads up higher in the pit. Thus another trailer load of denser and heavier mush was returned to the outside world via more frequent, smaller-volume hauls. The day's work was ended when the shovels were no longer useful for the task.

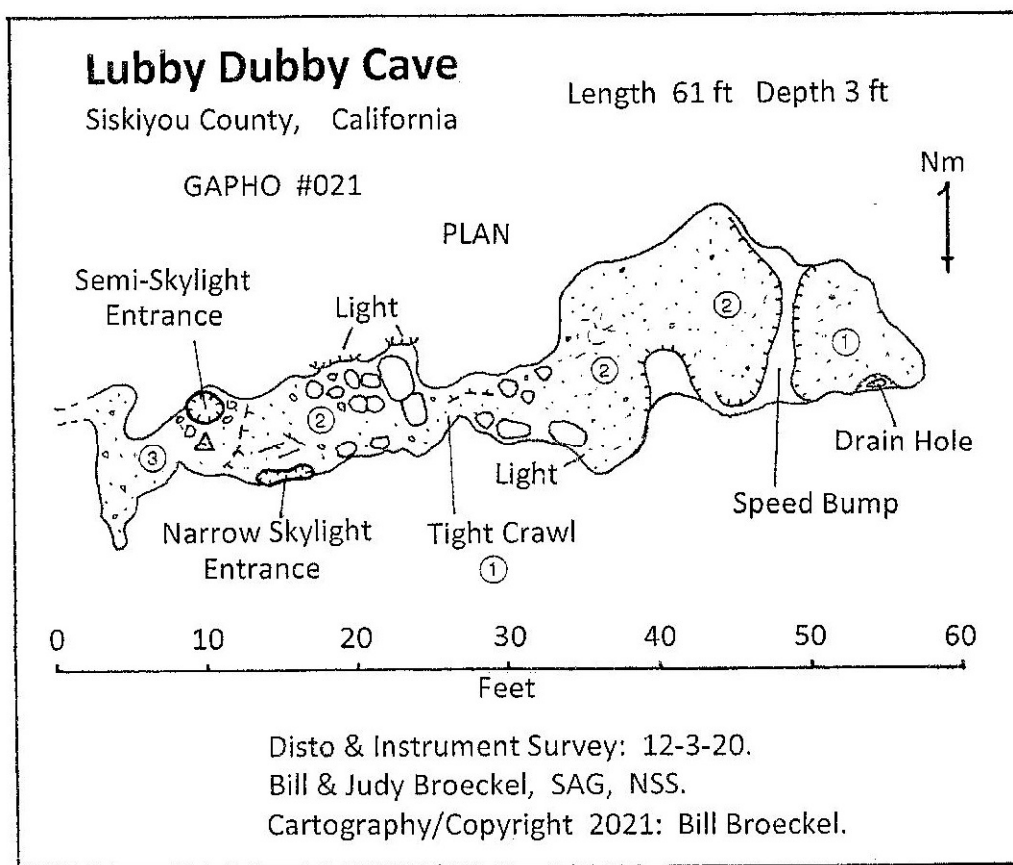
Accomplishments were varied. A mega-heavy trailer load was hauled off. A salamander ended up relocated in a nice, dampish spot, and a stunned, cold chipmunk was resuscitated. No evidence to identify a possible perpetrator was discovered while sifting through the gunk, with much effort. The pile up on the cave floor has been greatly de-bulked, but as you might imagine, more work with finer tools is still needed.

continued

Cartography

Bruce Rogers had a good map of Sunbeam Pit published in the Cal Caver 31/3, Sep. 1980, and later reprinted in the 1990 NSS Convention Guidebook. At the clean-up trip last Fall, a few nearby little surface tubes were noticed, and last winter Judy and I managed to document a couple of them. Both have small surprises.

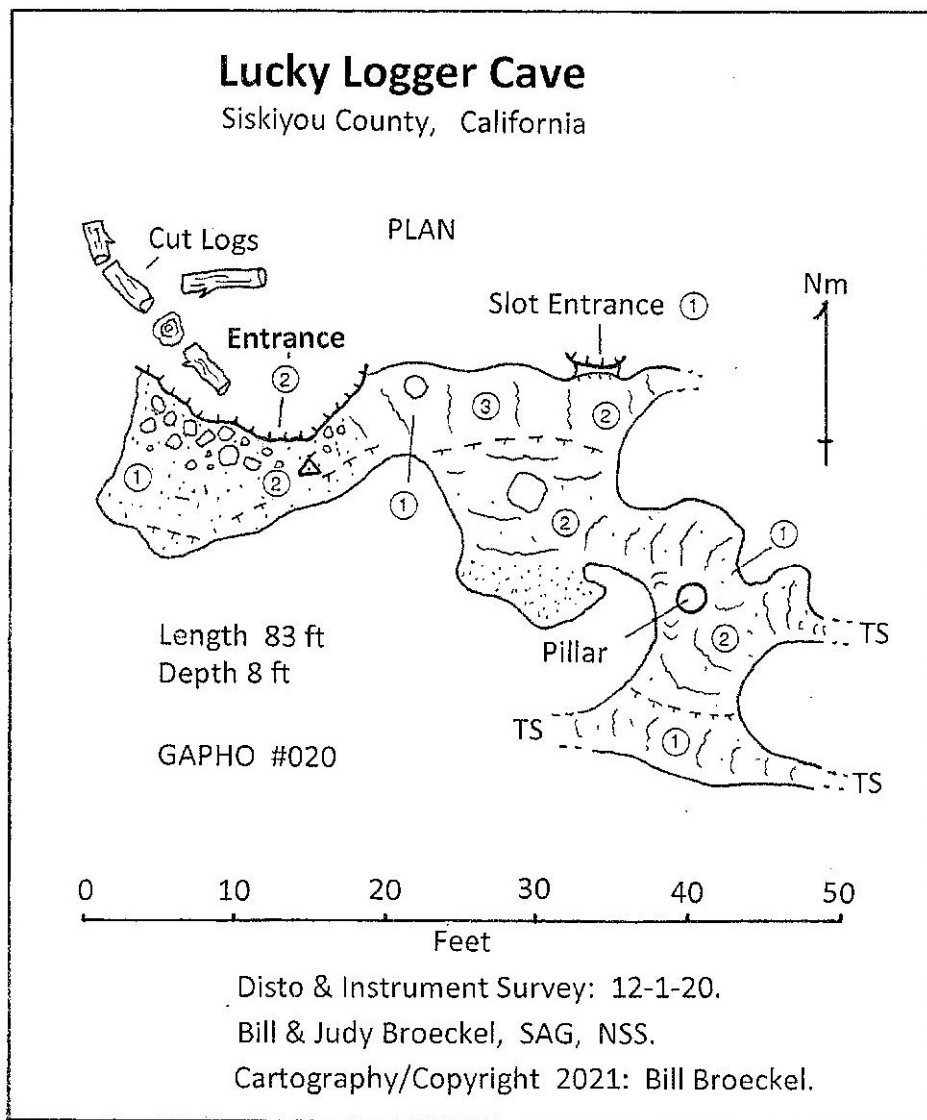
The one named Lubby Dubby has an easy-to-see entrance with a suspiciously limited immediate extent. Visible at first glance were scattered breakdown, and daylight from various sources. Fortunately, back to the left, a narrow crawl on one's side provides some needed length to the cave. This passage opens out into a low dark back-room, with a cool, damp and sandy floor. As a nice contrast, this area features scant breakdown. So Lubby Dubby Cave undergoes an interesting character change. Total length is 61-ft (same as the depth of Sunbeam Pit).



Map: Lubby Dubby Cave

Lucky Logger is the name of the other little cave. This one has a low broad entrance further away from Sunbeam Pit, and is harder to see. There are some cut logs in front of the cave. Like Lubby Dubby, a crawl-way goes off to the left. In this instance, it leads to an interesting slot entrance that may represent an original egress of surging lava. The surprise in Lucky Logger is a steep down-slope into a breakdown-free continuation. Slide down this, then proceed up and

continued



Map: Lucky Logger Cave

through a pillared window, then down again to where it just gets too small. It's nice and dark back in there. Total length for Lucky Logger is 83-ft.

Conclusion

Sunbeam Pit Cave has the 61-ft vertical entrance, 483-ft of walking passage, and beautiful features. It was surveyed in 1979 by Bruce Rogers, John Tinsley, Kathy Williams, and Gary Mele, from SFBC. Naturally, it has always been a popular and storied cave among cavers. But now this dumping event is just so very sad. Thanks to all for helping with the mitigation efforts. Rosters for clean-up trips: 10-18-20 Chris, Vandy, Spencer, Jeremy, Matt, Katrina, Jim, Liz, Russ, Steve, Melanie, Philip, Don, CJ, Kit, and Bill (sorry I only found my first name list). Then on 4-24-21 Steve Hobson, Jim Wolff, Liz Wolff, Arley Kisling, Breanna Kisling, Spencer Haggard, Tom Rickman, Tyanna Blaschak, Melanie Jackson, Dave Smith, Russ Yoder, Matt Silva, Thorne Bertrand, Bill Broeckel, Scott Lewis, Lisa Wilson, David Martin, and Sharon Bertrand.

BB

RENEWALS: Dues notices were absent from the SAG RAG during the pandemic, so there may be some accounts past due. In consideration of the times, make-up dues payments are optional, but this year's dues (2021) are requested to keep SAG RAGs coming and to pad the Grotto coffers. Note that our major expenses these days are to respond to good caving causes requesting funds from time to time. These expenditures are discretionary to the executive committee (vote for trustworthy officers) and are sometimes brought to Grotto meetings for a vote (come to meetings). Thank-you for your responses to help Shasta Area Grotto keep crawling, or walking the big passages :->

NAME(S): _____

NSS#(S): _____

PRIMARY GROTTTO: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

_____ *SAG Dues (includes RAG) \$5 per person or family (circle)*

_____ *SAG RAG subscription only, without membership - \$5*

_____ *Total: Send cash, money order or check made out to*

"Shasta Area Grotto" and address to Melanie Jackson at

708 Yama Street, Yreka CA 96097. The Grotto thanks you.

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.**

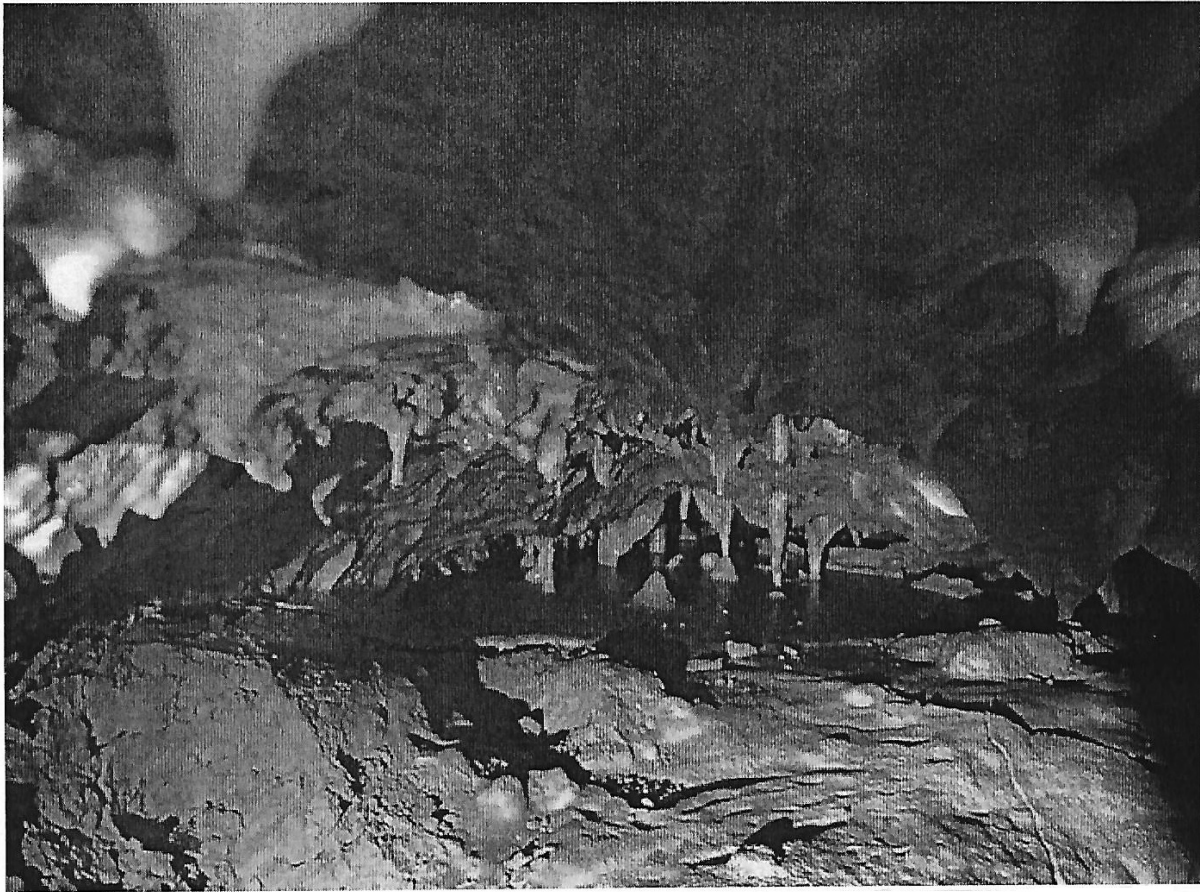
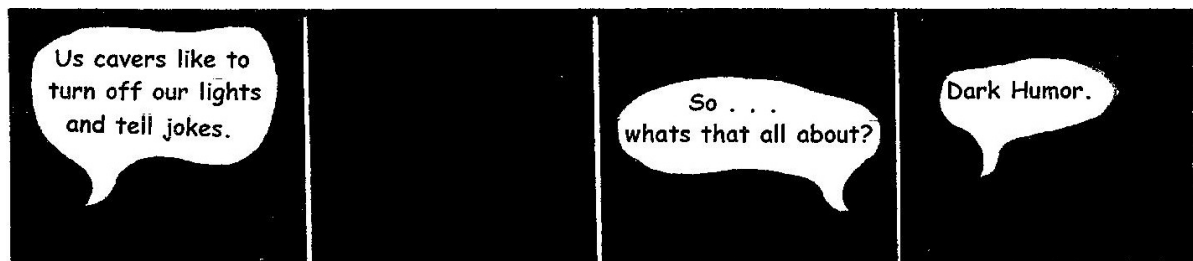


Photo by Breanna Kisling



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