

sag rag

42:2 Mar-Apr 2023



Blue sky over Triangle Rock 1-28-23.

INSIDE: Triangle Caves

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CAVE CALENDAR 2023

- June 9-11 Rescue training and caving camp-out at Lava Beds
 details at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/663932551655695>
- June 16-18 Caving Camp-out at Hat Creek (details as above)

SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bill Broeckel

Ketchup in Progresso soup – one of my recipes when Judy is up in Seattle with the grandbaby. Catch-up in Progress is also for the SAG RAG, volume 42. This 2nd issue of the year will again focus on a single Northern California cavern in limestone, with lots of pictures. In this case it is another new cave, sort of. At least it hasn't been published before, until now, as far as I know. It wasn't on William Halliday's radar. Check it out and see what you think. I'm not too picky when it comes to caves. This one definitely has a dark zone. By the way, the whole concept of "new cave" is somewhat dubious. After all, most of them, it turns out, are really quite old.

I was out looking for caves (lava tubes) the other day, and encountered a rattlesnake, with beautiful brown color and pattern. I saw it before it buzzed, but wanted a closer look. We communicated, and respected each other's space, the snake probably the more polite. The way I have it figured out is this. If you don't encounter a rattlesnake at least once each summer, then that means you are not trying hard enough. But be careful. **BB**

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SHASTA AREA GROTTO

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

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

TRIANGLE CAVES

By Bill Broeckel

Are you kidding me?

Given the real winter, we were facing a remote objective way out in the Klamath Mountains. Access was doubtful, the caves themselves were not so much, and some people were down sick. Yes, I had my doubts about this trip. I imagined steep slopes, thick brush, burn downs, and snow to the armpits, with no caves in sight. But I shouldn't have worried. Eight cavers showed up early on a brisk but sunny morning. Anything could happen.

Not very many skis were to be seen, so I ditched my snowshoes, and hopped into Dallas Carlon's truck to carpool. The trip went down like this. First we dropped a kid off at a friend's house. Kids are pretty smart these days. Next we traveled way up in the mountains, lots of snow all around. Eventually came the inevitable dirt road, bouncing around and splashing through mud. Pretty soon we were driving on snow, then came up on seriously deep and drifted snow. Above us were outcrops of beautiful white limestone and blue sky. Alas, it was too far away to walk through the snow. Well of course, it's a big snow year January in the Klamath Mountains. There's going to be snow, and that's a good thing too. We need a snowpack, even though it might not exactly be helpful for our cave trip.

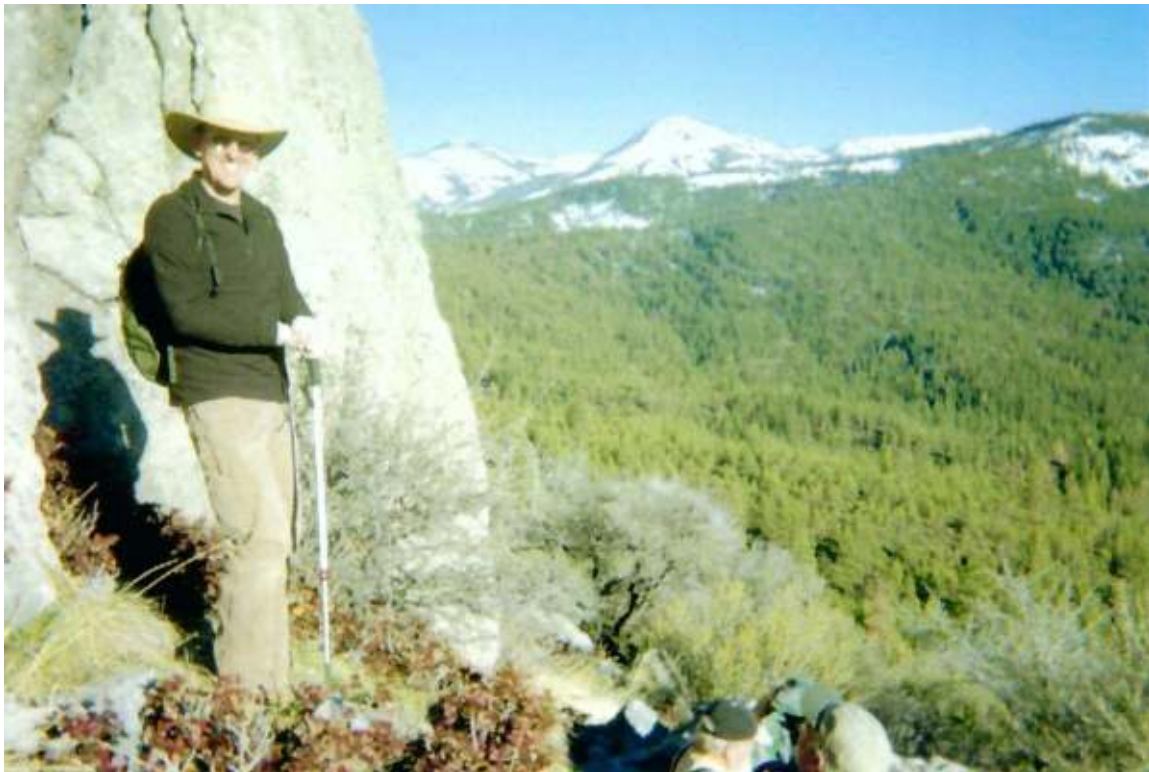
But Chairman Hobson, fearless leader, was ready for this very moment, and instantly brought forth an alternative plan. Back down the main dirt road, there was a side road that went within striking distance of one of the lower outcrops. The outcrop looked triangular and soon became "Triangle Rock" to us, by general consensus. The side road was little more than a wood-cutters track likely to wash out soon. Today we could reach the road's apex where we parked, and set out for Triangle Rock. With the possibility of poison oak, Liz Wolff and Mel Jackson elected to guard the cars, but later went cave hunting far up a distant ridge.

On foot to reach Triangle Caves

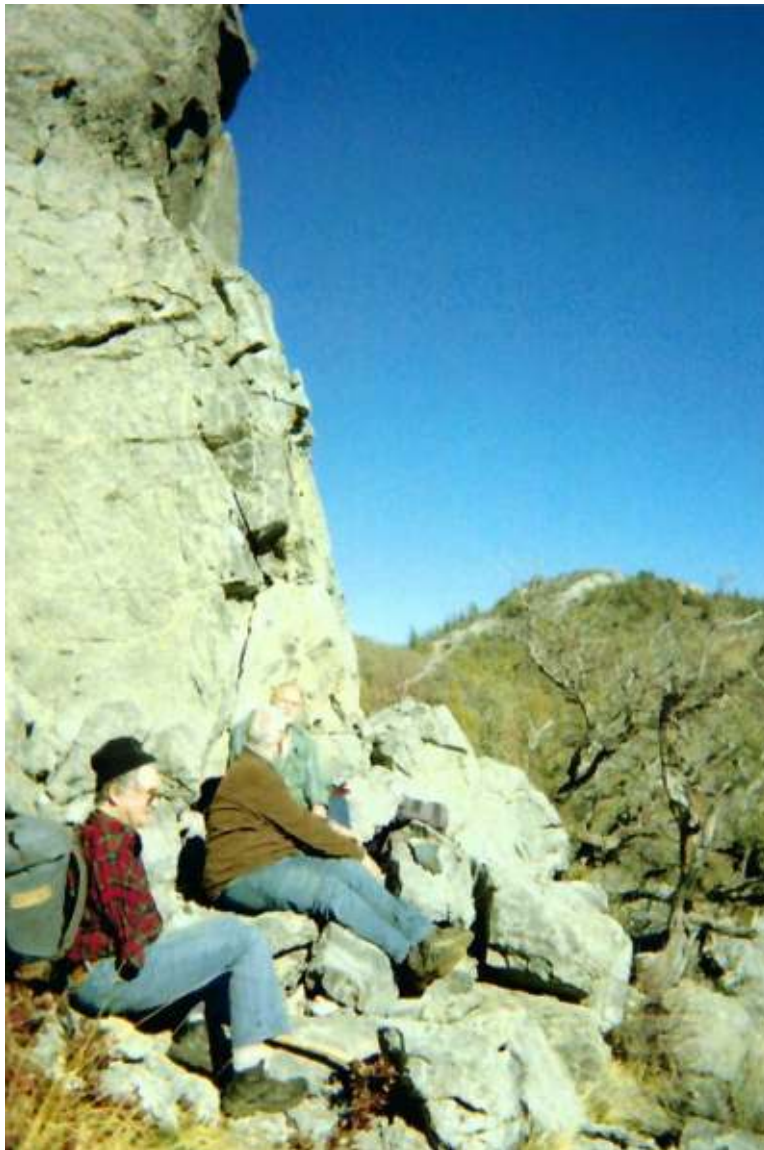
The rest of us took on the steep brushy slope sometimes eased by short, incoherent segments of cut trails and light logging debris. The overall angle was favorable and notably snow-free, somehow managing to occupy a microclimate snow shadow. We were driven toward our triangular goal, in part by a vague collective memory of an unmapped cave in this very outcrop from a previous cave hunt. (See page 12 for an old 6-10-90 pencil sketch of this veritable rumor of a "cave" remembered as a small, nasty, dusty, vermin-infested crawl hole of limited extent or interest. Sometimes there is no need to over-hype a cave).

Today we were happy to even reach the base of Triangle Rock, and lay our hands on the warm limestone, heated by the thin sunshine of January. We were surrounded by distant, snow covered ridges and mountains. Breezes were light and we broke open our drinks, snacks and lunches. Scouts were deployed to search for entrances and rumored caves. The wise waited in situ for the shouted "Cave Ho", and to discuss the merits of the various scouts and other high level caving-philosophical topics.

Continued



Dallas Carlon at Triangle Rock 1-28-23.



Rest break at the base of Triangle Rock 1-28-23.

I looked to the right and had nearly circumnavigated the entire outcrop before locating some likely openings. I should have looked left. Oh well, there was still time for a quick cave survey. There were caves to consider. Unlikely as it may have seemed, and for better or worse, into the labyrinth we crept. Mike Spiess did instruments, Dallas pushed passages, and I took notes. Jim Wolff, David Mundt, and Steve Hobson were free to explore holes, passageways, geology or philosophy as they wished.

Triangle Caves Described

Since the caves occupied Triangle Rock, they were named by simple association on that very day, 1-28-23. By now, astute caver readers will have noticed and wondered about the plurality of "Triangle Caves". Well, it turns out there are two caves next to each other, connected by a handshake. Thus there are two sides to Triangle Caves: a left side and a right. The caves are roughly equal in extent, about 60-ft each, with a combined grand total surveyed passage length of 129 feet. The connection points included a tiny hole that allows light to pass through, and, deeper in the caves, a bona fide handshake connection point. Dallas had to wedge himself into a narrow crevice in order to make the actual shaking of hands possible.

Both sides featured blackened ceilings near the entrances. Floors were mostly covered in packrat pellets. Off season provides damper and better conditions for visitation, with less dust and less coughing. The left cave ends in a packrat nest of mounded up sticks, while the right side ends when it just gets too small. No hibernating bats were seen.

The entrances are up on easily climbable ledges. The left entrance has a chock-stone in the way, but you can readily squirm over the top of it with some attention to certain knobby details. The right entrance is also divided, in this case by a scenic entrance pillar. Keen cave observers may detect some very modest decorations in the form of very thin flowstones. In the left cave, a curious coprolite-like pile of darker rock sits attached to a ledge in the dome climb, like a blob of lava rock deep in the heart of an otherwise light colored limestone cavern. Altogether, it is not much of a cave, but in the event, not completely without interest, and the subject of Siskiyou County's newest limestone cave map (see page 10).

Dallas also came up with two even shorter caves in the next alcove to the right. Both were crawlways. One had a vertical fissure component heading up to possible entrances higher on Triangle Rock. Dallas made some progress through a tight, straight-up squeeze and probably pushed the cave past 30-ft in passage length. However, this pending cave survey will likely be reserved for some future snowy winter when another eight or so cavers can have a day in the open, mostly adventuring in the sunshine on the surface.

BB



Pillar at right entrance Triangle Caves 1-28-23.



Entering left entrance to Triangle Caves 1-28-23.



Choke stone at left entrance to Triangle Caves 1-28-23.

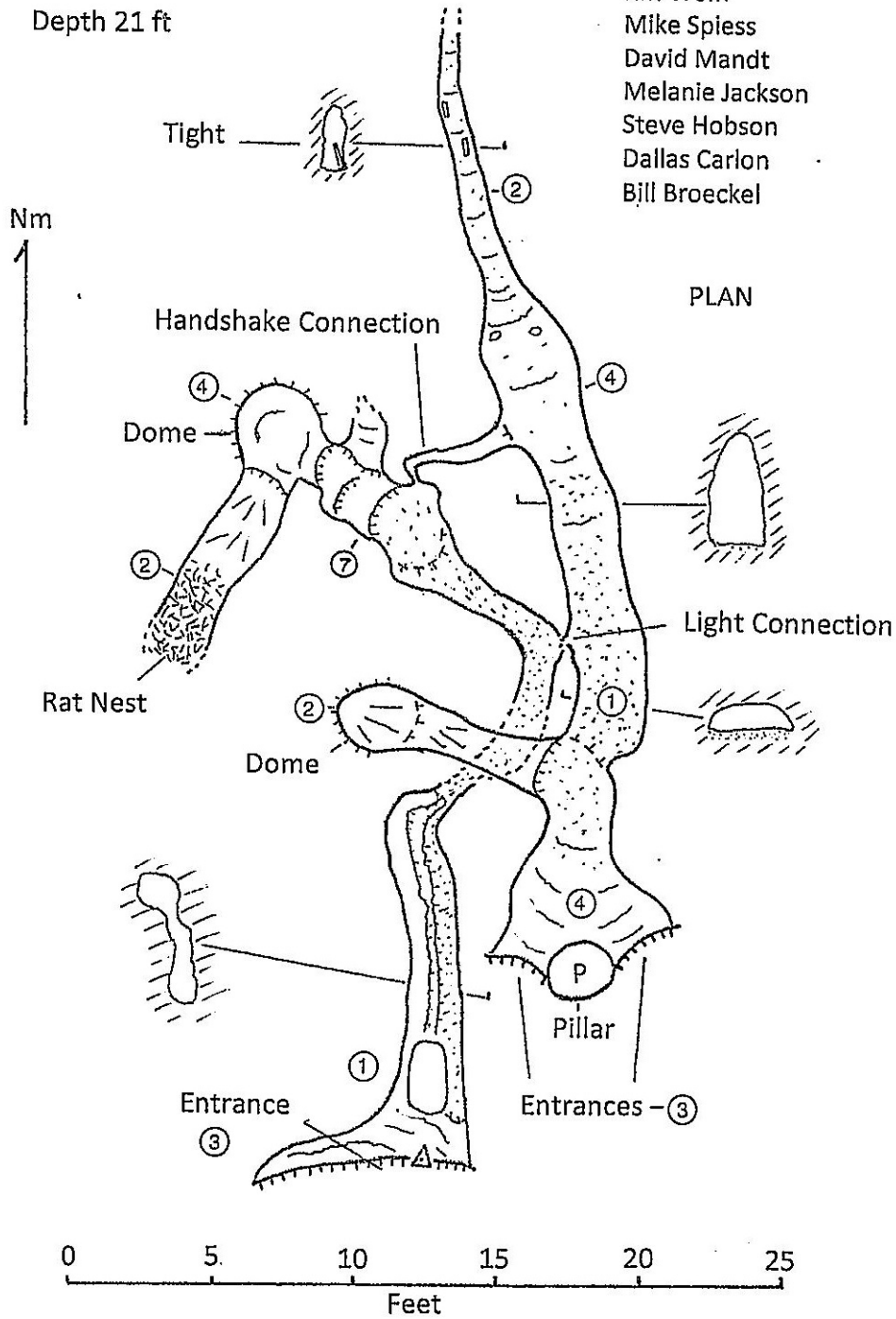
Triangle Cave

Siskiyou County, CA

Shasta Area Grotto N.S.S.
Disto and instrument survey 1-28-23.

Length 129 ft
Depth 21 ft

- Liz Wolff
- Jim Wolff
- Mike Spiess
- David Mandt
- Melanie Jackson
- Steve Hobson
- Dallas Carlon
- Bill Broeckel

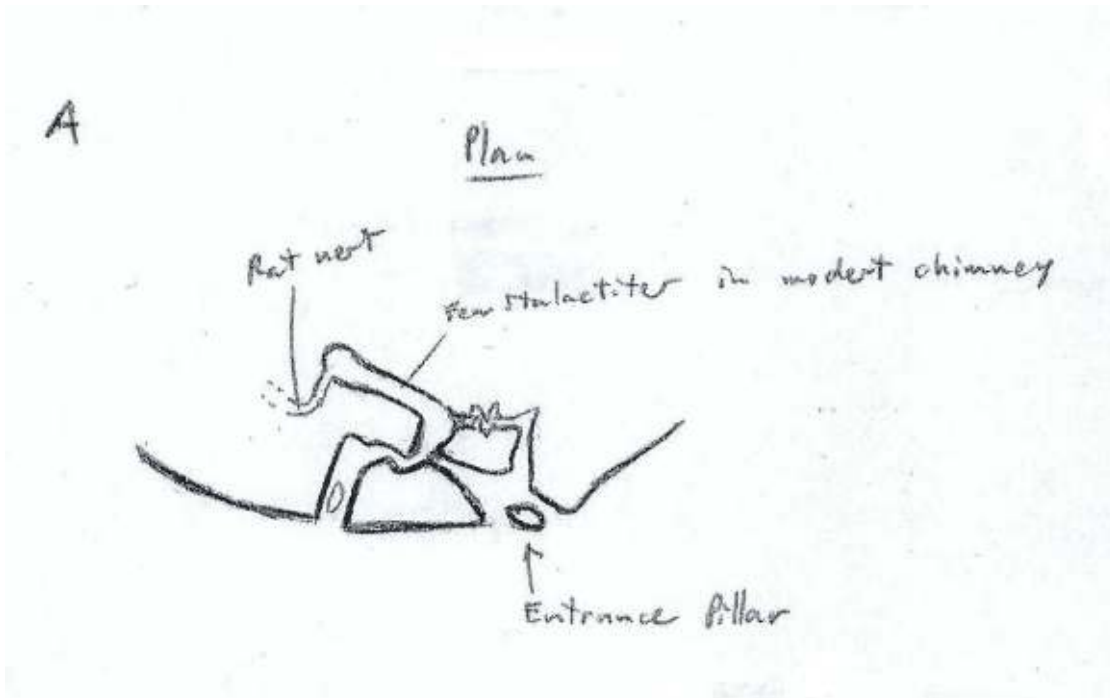


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Map: Triangle Cave



Thin flowstone interior of left Triangle Caves 1-28-23.



Pencil sketch of Triangle Caves ("Cave A" from 6-10-90)

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