

sag rag

43:4 July-Aug 2024



“Back to School Issue” - when your parents are cavers!

INSIDE: June & July Meeting Minutes, Trip Reports

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at various sites or homes on the fourth Saturday of most months at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, subject to changes by email. Membership dues are \$5 per year, due at the first of the year, and include SAG RAG subscription. Send dues to treasurer Melanie Jackson at 708 Yama St., Yreka CA 96097. Original material submitted for the SAG RAG, unless otherwise noted, is copyright to the SAG RAG. Within the caving community, such may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG. For use outside the cave community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication, always welcomed for consideration, to Dave Smith, 321 Mesa Verde Ct., Chico, CA 95973 or <theotherdavesmith@gmail.com>.

SAG RAG Summary by Dave Smith and Dave Mundt

This issue brings the June and July grotto meeting minutes as approved, with additional notes by Liz, and a bit of catch-up on May activities by Dave S. Besides those, we have several trip reports, and more for the next Sag Rag, a good sign

Upcoming SAG Meetings:

- **Sat. September 28 meeting 7:30 pm at CJ and Kit McKinley's, 6056 Snowline, McCloud.**
 - **Directions:**
 - From McCloud take Hwy 89 east 3.6 mi to Pilgrim Creek and turn left. Continue 3.2 mi to Winton Way and turn left again.
 - Continue 1.1 mi to Hotlum and turn right.
 - Continue 0.8 mi to Widow Springs and turn right again.
 - Continue 0.3 mi to Snowline Rd.
 - Turn left and continue 0.2 mi to 6056 Snowline Circle.
- **Oct 20-27 campout at McCloud Bridge; meeting the 26th**
- **Dec 7 SAG meeting at Steve's; nominations for 2025 officers**

June 29 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting Minutes:

Present: Jim and Liz Wolff, Mike Spiess and Pat Witt, Michael Stark and Stephanie Griffin, Luke Vroegop, Sharon Bertrand and James Newell, Mike and Barbara Stufflebeam and Tom Rickman. Several persons had to leave early. Visitors: Scott Linn (Oregon High Desert Grotto), Anastasiya Razumovska (Diablo, SFBC, MLG), Bram Lovelace (Cascade Grotto).

Lava Beds seasonal employees visiting to cave were Jessica Shores, Ed Gomes, Casey Devine, Logan Johnson and Nekai Eversole.
Vice-chair Jim Wolff called the meeting to order at 7:57pm.
The minutes of the May meeting were approved as read.

The treasurers report showed a beginning balance of \$405.48, expense of \$100 toward the memorial rope box, and income of \$10 dues, leaving a balance of \$315.48

plus \$116 in petty cash, for a grand total of \$431.48. Michael, Stephanie and the Bertrand's each paid 2 years dues at the meeting.

Mark sent an accounting of his purchases, and the payments made toward the rope box: the box is 48"x20"x 19" aluminum for \$355.87. The cost of transporting the box to the camp will be \$30. CJ proposed that SAG pick up the cost. Steph moved and Mike Spiess seconded. Motion passed. Mark made a 1/10-inch-thick brass plate for Spencer to engrave with the wording:

**Property of
Klamath Mountains Conservation Task Force of the National Speleological
Society
Dedicated to the memory of Steve Knutson aka "Captain Speleo"**

The Webpage is up to date, Mike would like future campouts, trips and meetings to add to the calendar page.

Shasta Area Grotto Meeting July 27, 2024 Minutes

Attending the meeting: Elizabeth Symington, Robert Anderson, Lauren Manwaring, Dave Smith, Stephanie Griffin, Michael Stark, Brody Blacet, Luke Vroegop, David Todd, Arien Graderi, Dalia Svello, Zach Vebehor, Xeronimo Castineda, Katrina Smith, Spencer Haggard, CJ and Kit McKinley, Barb and Mike Stufflebeam, Liz and Jim Wolff, Melanie Jackson, Steve Hobson and Kira.

Meeting called to order at 1930 by Steve Hobson, June minutes read and approved without corrections.

Treasurer's report: \$415.48 in bank, \$116 in petty case for a total of 471.48.

SAG has contributed money for various projects, will pay for the packer to get the rope box up to the Marbles.

Marble Mountain Trip: Cost is \$225 for 75 lbs with the packer. Meet Sunday evening at Lover's Camp parking lot. Packer will be there at 8 am on Monday morning, have stuff ready. Decision to move camp from upper meadow to cave camp because so many people have not been to the lower karst.

Plan for a trip to Apogee on day to place plaque, Steve is bringing a drill. Plan on visiting Bigfoot, Trail Junction, and Monkey River entrance. Email Steve to confirm your participation.

2027 Western Regional: floating idea to move convention to Lava Beds due to the unmanageable logistics for the Shasta Lake limestone caves. Voted and approved by group. Dalia from MLG, who helped organized last year's regional told SAG to expect approximately 120 people. She is willing to help with organization when needed. Liz will get ahold of Lava Beds management to organize dates in September 2027, will attempt later in month for cooler weather. Dave Todd floated the idea of holding the camping and meetings at the fairground in Tule as they have camping and RV set ups

along with kitchen and halls for dinners and meetings, he will contact the fairgrounds to get pricing and dates. Steve will lead a group at this year's regional (2024 Washington) to discuss ideas and planning with the local grotto. Discussed having the Speleo-ed classes on Thursday and Friday and most cave trips on Saturday and Sunday.

Pluto Clean-up: the group discussed James Newell's desire to get Pluto Cave cleaned up from all the graffiti. Neil Marchington from Western Cave Conservancy has discussed wanting to get involved with his sandblaster trailer. SAG considers this a sacrifice cave and worries that it will be re-graffitied quickly, and Steve stated that he thinks that the grotto does not have the time and money to organize the project. Voted "no" to run the show and take on the management of the project. Will suggested to James that his grotto can organize it. Many, many people want to help if a project is started. The Western Cave Conservancy has grant money to help with supplies.

Trip reports:

A bit more May By Dave Smith

Back in May we put several teams together to finish some old and new caves, work that was summarized in the May minutes, Sag Rag 43(3), p. 6.

The first was Mushpot, up to that point about half completed despite being the cave many visitors to LABE see first because it has lighting, visitor seating, and easy exploring except for the aa crawl to the 25' bitter end room.

The next part, only about half completed due to missing measuring instruments and visiting bats, was a look into surface tubes that might have been significant enough to be reclassified as caves. Those included Not Well Cave at 105.2', located in a rockpile and having a tight entrance and 4 ft. climbdown. Those make Not Well potentially hazardous for non-cavers and for families, since getting in, and back out, are separate challenges, and help might be hours away.

Two of the other caves are small, but enjoyable for kids and bright enough to be explored without lights. Both could use paths from the parking areas that circle them though, as they have a main entrance and marginal side entrances that need to tie to each other so kids aren't lost after slipping outside.

It will be nice to return once the full set is explored, or are waiting for us to show up again to help out. **DS**

Sharon celebrated retirement by caving in Greece with her daughters, and Thorne and; Sharon caved in Arizona.

Michael and James went on the APC cleanup. They pulled gear and old rope from the cave. Michael and Steph went on the Samwel Cave graffiti and Natural Bridge (Calaveras) cleanups. They went to Scorpion Cave to survey with Joel; Steph wants to learn how to keep a survey book now.

“Trudging the Road” Trip Report and update, May 25.

In Sag Rag 43 (3) Liz Wolff reported on a new lava tube reported to SAG by some loggers. She and Jim made a trip to look and plan for a more formal entry. Tessa Richards provides the following report:

On May 25, 2024, the Shasta Area Grotto went out to explore a pit that was discovered by the lumber people this past winter. In attendance was Liz Wolff, Jim Wolff, Melanie Jackson, Steve Hobson, Daniel Hewitt, Dave Todd, and Tessa Richards. Because of where this newly opened pit is located, the group was extremely interested. There aren't many caves in that direct vicinity. The pit looked to be about a 12' drop and presented an interesting rigging issue because there is nowhere close to rig from, and the surrounding area was sand. Steve had Daniel and Dave rig to a tree about 40' away, and they moved a downed tree to the pit, so the rope had something to lay on and keep it from getting buried at the lip. It's important to have the tree propped with rocks and larger branches on it, so it doesn't roll to the hole.



I (**Tessa**) was the first person to descend into the pit after taking time to clear some precarious rocks and debris at the entrance. I landed onto a large dirt mound, and I carefully walked down to the “floor” which consisted of a bunch of breakdown rocks that would move on you. The room was fairly large, and I would estimate the height at the lowest and tallest point being about 17'-19'. That is a guess. There is a room straight ahead from the dirt mound, and I carefully climbed into it. Again, all breakdown rocks, and this room was significantly smaller than the main room. Just off to the left of the hole I climbed into there is a down climb that you can see what I think is dirt floor. I was unable to complete my exploration down there because of time limitations and it was unstable. I helped Melanie survey the first room, and Liz showed me how to complete a sketch with the measurements. A more in-depth survey will be completed soon. I feel beyond fortunate to have the experience of being the first in this cave, and I was asked to name the cave. I decided upon the name **Trudging the Road**. I cannot wait to see the completed map and finish exploring it.

Dry Camp July 25-27, 2024, in a Nutshell By Liz Wolff

Twenty-three cavers attended the 2024 Dry Camp event. Participants were mainly from SAG, some were both Mother Lode Grotto (MLG) & SAG, and some strictly MLG. It was a good mix of experienced and novice cavers. The days were hot, but not horribly so; smoke drifted in and out from the Park Fire burning northward from Oroville. Many cave trips were taken both Friday and Saturday, with only 2 on Sunday.

From SAG: Kit & CJ McKinley, Jim & Liz Wolff, Mike & Barbara Stufflebeam, Steve Hobson & grand monster Kiera Frandsen, Michael Stark & Stephanie Griffin, Melanie Jackson, Dave Smith, Luke Vroegop, and Dave Todd. SAG & MLG: Spencer Haggard, Brody Blacet, and Katrina Smith. MLG members included Zach Uebelhor, Elizabeth Symington, Dalia Sueiro & Arien Ghaderi, and Xero Castaneda. First time attenders were Lauren Manwaring & Robert Andersen.

Friday's cave trip included Kit & CJ leading Mike S, Dave S, Melanie and Elizabeth to Three Level Ice Cave, Hourglass, Alarming Extension and Wooden Toad. Lots of hiking in the heat over the partially shaded lava flow! Many retired to Medicine Lake to swim.

Saturday trips included a group doing vertical entrances of Sunbeam, Tire Tube and the Double Window of Catwalk led by CJ. A second group led by Liz & Jim went to check on access into Yellowjacket Ice Cave; play around in a flow from Shotgun Peak. A third group led by Barbara and Dave S went to the Freudian Complex and an ice cave. Many went for a swim before a potluck dinner and the July SAG meeting.

Sunday Kit & CJ led a small group to Ice Palace. A second trip led by Dave T went to see if a hot spring marked on old maps really existed. The campsite was combed for debris (mostly more broken clay pigeons) and vacated before noon.

Trip Report Yellow Jacket Ice Cave 7/27/2024 Luke Vroegop

Steve Hobson and Kiera, Liz and Jim Wolff, Dave Todd, Melanie Jackson, Michael Stark, Stephaine Griffin, and Luke Vroegop

On the first full day of dry camp one of the groups decided to check out Yellow Jacket Ice Cave. Liz informed us that the cave had not been explored since the late 70's and features a long ice slide to a shallow pit. Most years the slide entrance is covered from floor to ceiling with ice. However, with all the hot weather this summer, we were hopeful of finding a way in. Upon arriving Michael and I decided to get the minimum amount gear on to check it out. We made it about 15 feet in and to our dismay found ice touching the ceiling.

There were several small ice formations, which was very surprising because of how close to the entrance we were. After 10 mins of belly crawling along the edge of the possible entrance in an inch of ice water we couldn't locate the slide. Michael and I decided to look at several other possible entrances. Michael found the best one. However, he only made it another 20 feet down before the passage got too narrow. We both decided suiting up earlier would have been a good idea as our base layers were now wet, torn, and covered in mud. We were all a little disappointed that the entrance was still frozen solid. However, it's a cave to keep our eyes on for when it opens back up.

Sunday Funday and Searching for my Morels – Tessa Richards May 26

What better way to spend a Sunday than caving? It was May 26, 2024, and the group consisted of Lauren Manwaring, Daniel Hewitt, and Tessa Richards. Lauren is newer to caving, and it was her first trip to the SAG area. We stopped by Bat cave for Daniel where we saw four bats; 2 outside the gate and two just inside the gate, so we left. Then we had to stop by Hourglass which provided a fun crawl up the tube for Lauren to experience, and then we proceeded down. We did pick up quite a few pieces of garbage as we walked/crawled along. We then entered Alarming Extension.

While venturing through we stopped numerous times to just sit and enjoy the dark. We went to the next stop which I was calling Postage Stamp; however, it's called Sign. It's a cute tube with little breakdown and an awesome column.



There were a ton of people out hunting for morels in this area. This is when I decided whenever anyone asks me what I'm doing when I'm in all my caving gear I'm just going to respond, "searching for my morels". The last cave of the day was 3 Level, and it's always fun to see a new person's reaction to this cave. It seemed to me the ice was less this time compared to last July when I was in it. In the ice lake area there were some new columns of ice, and you can see the ice has been changing a lot over the season. Another interesting note about the ice, is the crawl out rock area was covered in ice which it's been dry whenever I've previously gone to this cave. Grateful for the opportunity to cave in this area and leave it a bit cleaner than when we got there.

The next cave brought us to the road for Bobcat, but it had a downed tree, so we had to turn back. There were a ton of people out hunting for morels in this area. This is when I decided whenever anyone asks me what I'm doing when I'm in all my caving gear I'm just going to respond, "searching for my morels". The last cave of the day was 3 Level, and it's always fun to see a new person's reaction to this cave. It seemed to me the ice was less this time compared to last July when I was in it. We did have a bunch of microplastic cleaned up throughout the breakdown. At the end of the tunnel past the squeeze in the ice room there was charcoal writing on the floor. I tried my best to erase the graffiti, but it left a smudged area. In the ice lake area there were some new columns of ice, and you can see the ice has been changing a lot over the

season. Another interesting note about the ice, is the crawl out rock area was covered in ice which it's been dry whenever I've previously gone to this cave. Grateful for the opportunity to cave in this area and leave it a bit cleaner than when we got there.



Sign Cave (above), with a massive column near the back. Photo credit: Tessa Richards

SAG RAG
321 Mesa Verde Ct
Chico CA 95973

STAMP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO:

Page 1 Back to School!
Page 2 Upcoming SAG Meetings
Page 3-4 June & July Meeting Minutes
Page 4 -8 Trip Reports