

February 1988

Intercom, Volume 24, No. 1, January-February 1988

Lowell Burkhead

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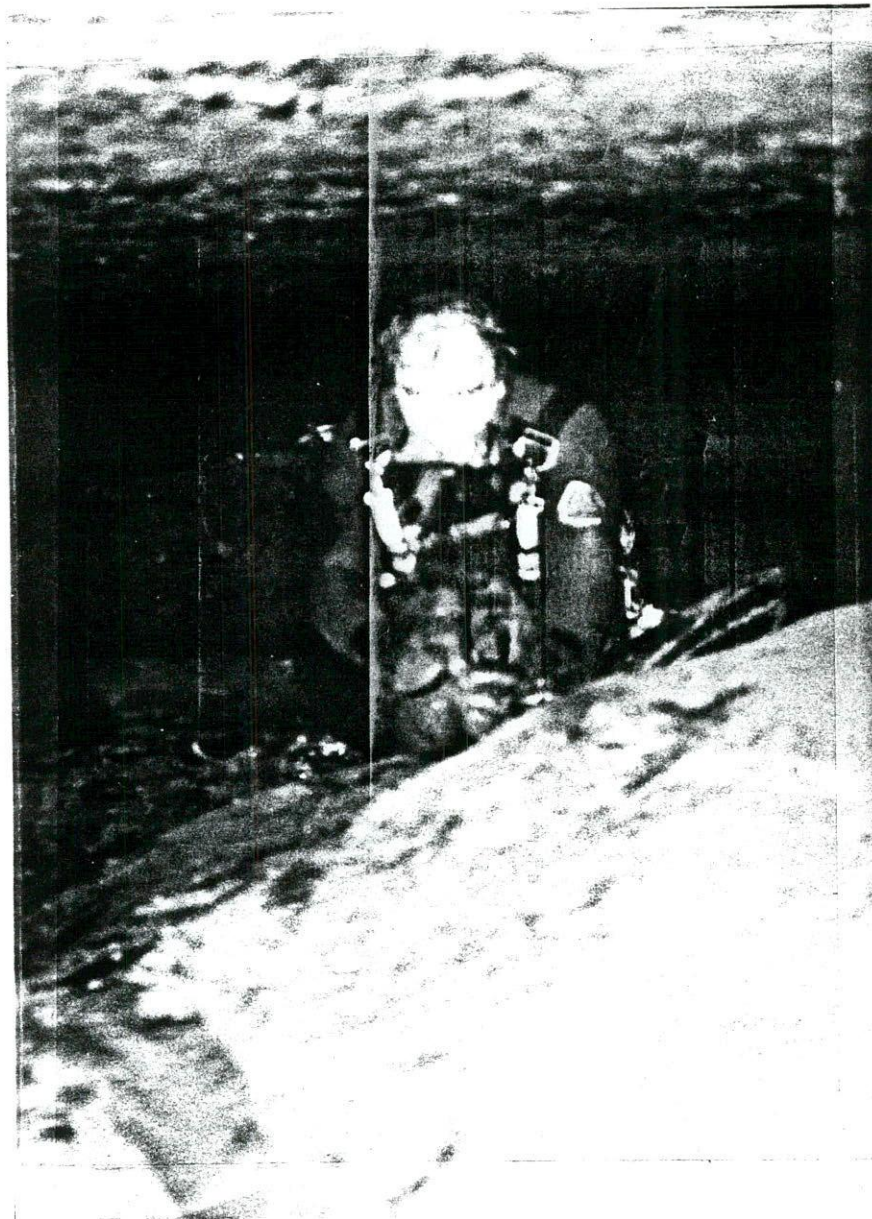
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I N T E R C O M

Published Semi-spasmodically By

THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society



Volume XXIV Issue 1

January — February 1988

January February 1988

Vol 24 No 1

The INTERCOM is published semi-spasmodically by the Iowa Grotto, P.O. Box 228 Iowa City, Iowa 52240. The Iowa Grotto is affiliated with the National Speleological Society, Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35810, and is dedicated to the exploration and study of caves. We will exchange publications with other organizations with the same dedication. Subscription rate is \$10.00 per year. Reproduction of material appearing in the INTERCOM must be authorized in writing by the editor.

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The Iowa Grotto meets at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in room 236 of Trowbridge Hall on the campus of the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. The Iowa Grotto was founded in 1949 and is the third oldest grotto west of the Mississippi.

Cover Photo: Randy Kwiatkowski in the breakdown room,
Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa
Photo by Art Dahms



IOWA GROTTO
National Speleological Society
P.O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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Vice-Chairman - - - - Larry Welch
Secretary-Treasurer - - - Mike Lace

Volume Twenty Four

Issue One

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GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting January 27, 1988

Called to order at 7:35 p.m. by chairman Michael Bounk. Adjourned at 8:31 p.m. Attendance: 10 Members No minutes or treasurers report were given.

OLD BUSINESS: The new \$10.00 dues rate and the family membership rate was discussed. NEW BUSINESS: The Hodag Hunt will be September 9-11, 1988 in Door Co. The Iowa Grotto election resulted in the following elected officers for the year 1988. Michael Bounk was re-elected as Chairman. Larry Welch was elected as Vice-Chairman and Mike Lace ran unopposed and is the new Secretary-Treasurer. TRIP REPORTS: Steve Moon reported on the trip he led with Mike Bounk and a Chuck from Minnesota up to Pete's Pipe and then through Pothole Country sightseeing. That was one of several trips made in Cold Water Cave on the regular weekend. Mike Lace reported on a trip to a Clayton County pit with Steve and Gary and a trip the day before with Larry when another open sink was found in the same area but couldn't be entered due to frozen debris in the entrance. Lowell Burkhead reported on the first really successful cave dive into Wild Well Cave. There were two divers from the Wisconsin Speleological Society: Randy Kwiatkowski and Art Dahms. The surface crew was Mike Nelson who set up the trip and Lowell Burkhead. FUTURE TRIPS: Glenwood (maybe), Wild Well and a possible return to the Clayton County pits after it thaws.

Regular Meeting February 24, 1988

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Bounk at 7:37 p.m. Ten members were present. The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read. The treasurers report listed \$552.36 in the grotto treasury. OLD BUSINESS: Mike Bounk announced that the 1987 annual report has been submitted to the N.S.S. Mike also reported that he now has the new grotto rope that Greg purchased. Due to the work of many grotto members we are now caught up with the 1987 INTERCOM's as well as 1986 although these new editions have yet to be mailed. INTERCOM editorial procedures were discussed and it was decided that original INTERCOM cover artwork presented at any meeting will be voted on as to its acceptance. It was proposed that Steve Moon and Mike Bounk will be listed as senior co-editors of the INTERCOM and whoever prepares a particular issue will be listed as the associate editor. Missing HOTLINES, INTERCOMS, and Cold Water survey data were discussed. NEW BUSINESS: Novice tours at Cold Water Cave were mentioned and it was determined that anyone who prearranges a tour should lead that trip or make arrangements for another to lead it. Larry Welch suggested that current county platbooks should be copied for the grotto library. TRIP REPORTS: Lowell Burkhead reported on another cave dive trip to Wild Well. He also exhibited two 8 x 10 photos, one of the cave and a diver and one of the newly discovered Iowa Cave Fish. Mike Bounk reported on a January geology/tourist trip in Cold Water Cave with Betty Wheeler and George Huppert. Larry Welch recounted a tourist trip with Mike Nelson and a few Grinnell students. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

NOTES from the Associate Editor

By Lowell Burkhead

If this issue of the INTERCOM doesn't look like what you're used to, I hope it looks more like a real publication. After everyone was tired of my complaining, I was asked to do this issue and try to make it one for future associate editors to copy so our publication will be recognizable and producible. I will also put together a sheet of instructions explaining points that are too subtle to copy and the limits of allowable deviation. I will try to put back in the niceties of the old INTERCOM without making it impossible to produce like it was. Send any comments to the Senior Co-Editors as it is not my problem and I don't want to hear about it. Send positive comments to me.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF THE CARBIDE LAMP

by Lowell Burkhead

Carbide lamps don't wear out usually with under ten years of use. They are, however, usually abused to death in under three years. This is probably news to most cavers, electric and carbide. A good quality lamp properly cared for will last a lifetime. A poor quality lamp can be used to death in a summer.

The most common cause of death along with abuse is brass rot. Brass rot is a chemical reaction of the brass with environmental elements, spent carbide, and water. Spent carbide is the big offender. Leaving a fill of spent carbide in a lamp for a month destroys more brass than five years of regular use. After using your lamp, take it apart and clean all traces of spent carbide from all the parts. Remove any stuck carbide residue with vinegar. Make sure to rinse all the vinegar out also because it will react with the metal too. Dry all the parts and leave apart until everything including the felt is completely dry. Water is the other main cause of brass rot. Wet spent carbide eats brass at an unbelievable pace. Also, never leave a fill of fresh carbide in a lamp between trips. If your lamp has had a fill in it, just removing the fill leaves enough residue to cause damage if it isn't washed.

Brass rot on some lamps finds all the stresses left in the metal when it was manufactured. Small cracks start and trap water and then crack all the way through. Soft brass with no stresses in other lamps just turns into oxides and gets thinner until it's gone as in most of the Justrite lamps. Auto Lite and Guy's Dropper lamps crack and Premier lamps just disintegrate. Hopefully, they will soon improve now that they are being made by a different company.

The second most common cause of death is dents. Dents put stress into the metal that can crack and severe dents become punctures and misalignments. The end result is leaks that can't be fixed. Never beat your lamp bottom against a rock to remove spent carbide. Always carry a tool with your carbide to dig out spent carbide. I use a large nail. Don't over do it with the tool. Scratches start cracks and deep scratches cause the bottom to fall out of your lamp bottom. Don't over fill your lamp. Half to a short two thirds full is a proper fill. More will build up pressure and at the least make it hard to empty and at worst, bulge the bottom out or bend it enough to stress it. Then next time, the stresses will be cracks and the bottom will fall out.

Another common cause of lamp death is freezing. Remember that ice is larger than water. Never fill your water tank and then walk to the cave in sub-freezing weather. When you come out of the cave, empty the water tank and open the dripper to empty it. Leaving it burning only works when it's dark and you can see that it's still burning in the wind.

Wear is the other serious lamp killer. Wear is the easiest problem to prevent. Rub some soft candle wax into the bottom threads and into the gasket now and then. Worn threads is a particularly nasty problem because you rarely know there is anything wrong until the threads twist off in a cave leaving you in the dark. Also put some wax on the top of the lamp to lubricate the dripper detent bumps and keep them from wearing off and leaving holes.

You will soon find that caring for your lamp takes less time and effort than keeping a neglected lamp working. Also keep in mind that a caver with lamp problems is soon a caver with social problems.

TROUBLESHOOTING CARBIDE LAMP PROBLEMS

by Lowell Burkhead

Symptom	Cause	Remedy
Slow ebb and flare at beginning of burn.	The dripper is dripping onto the carbide; dripper should be in carbide. Inadequate carbide fill causing dripping.	Fill to proper level half to two thirds full. Dripper too short to reach carbide fill. Solder a piece of copper or brass wire onto the bottom of the dripper or replace dripper rod with longer one.
Flame constantly gets lower as fill is used up requiring adjustment.	Dripper flow improperly regulated because of improper gas back pressure against dripper water flow.	Replace tip (gas jet) Improper capillary action in the dripper tube affecting flow. Clean or replace dripper assembly.
Water blows out the filler cap vent.	Plugged tip. Partly plugged tip. Inadequately sized tip gas jet.	Clean tip or ream tip or replace tip as needed.
Flame suddenly drops and won't turn up with the dripper.	Lamp has run out of water and gas is escaping through the dripper.	Refill the lamp with clean water.
Tip constantly becomes plugged.	Felt is full of spent carbide. Felt is rotted and shedding pieces.	Clean or replace felt as needed.
Flame makes buzzing noise.	There is a gas leak next to the tip.	Reseat the tip. Replace the tip. Replace the gas tube if it is cracked in the threads.
	There is a drop of water on the tip.	Move out from under the drip and let it dry. The felt is wet. Put it in some dry clothes and squeeze the water out or replace with a dry one. Check for cracks in the bottom of the water tank or the side of the dripper.
Lamp gets too hot to handle while working normally.	Your lamp has a gas leak that you failed to smell and is using more fuel than normal which makes more heat or there is nothing wrong with your lamp but you have particularly hot carbide.	
Lamp will only burn a short time and the carbide tank is flooded with water.	Your carbide is old or defective.	Get some fresh new carbide from the grotto for \$.50/lb.
Dripper won't stay adjusted; it changes every time the lamp is jostled.	Threads in the dripper not properly loaded.	Re-tension dripper rod against lamp top.
	Dripper handle dropped into dent in the lamp top unloading threads.	On Justrite or Auto Lite, remove dripper assembly and lamp top and hammer out dent and reassemble. On other lamps, try to fashion a tool to push the dent out through the water filler or fill the dent.
Gas bubbles up through water tank and gasses caver.	Excessive gas pressure.	Turn down flame.(adjust the dripper) Ream or replace tip.
Lamp doesn't work for any reason listed or not and you can't fix it.		Send it to me because I can fix it and won't charge you too much.

THE WILD WELL PROJECT

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

January 2, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Lowell Burkhead, Randy Kwiatkowski and Art Dahms

On November 15, 1987, Doug Schmuecker made the first dive into Wild Well in eight years, and opened what we hope to be a new era in Iowa cave diving. The results of his first effort was the discovery of a left hand passage to the left of the "T" room, the first air bell. A secondary result was my having to reconsider my qualifications to join him in this large cave passage. I don't believe my cave diving skills have evolved to the level required for virgin pushes in underwater cave of this magnitude. At this point I was considering recruiting more experienced help to join Doug. As pure luck would have it, I got a call from Randy concerning Cold Water Cave, after which we discussed this project. Randy was so willing to help in the diving and provided so much logistical help that it only seemed fair to give credit where it was due, and declare this a joint Iowa Grotto/Wisconsin Speleological Society project. When Doug found that he would not be able to make this dive as planned, he gave us his blessing to proceed without him, so Randy brought along his friend Art. They had plenty of experience together, which would make for the safest imaginable team, another consideration Doug and I had discussed.

We all met at the appointed place and time and got our expedition under way. Randy had secured a snowmobile and spent some time building a sled. The fourteen inches of snow we had the week before made it seem unlikely that we could get the gear to the site any other way. He and I drove it down and found that we should be able to bring in the 4x4s, and save ourselves a lot of messing around with transferring all of that scuba gear a couple of times.

Things started to move swiftly now, as Lowell and I helped the "Pros from Plover" (Wisconsin) don their drysuits and cave diving gear and back up gear; dual 100³' tanks, lights and more lights, primary and secondary reels, line markers, called "dorfs", regulator retainers, etc. They must have each been carrying 100 pounds fully decked out.

I got a few photos while they dressed and walked down to the Well, and a couple more as they entered the water. Soon they were gone and there was nothing for Lowell and me to do but B.S. and kill time. They had assured us that they could get out of anything they got into and that there was no reason to set a time limit, though Randy had mentioned that his primary light was only good for an hour and a half. He had also offhandedly mentioned that should they encounter air filled passage they would come out and switch to their wetsuits to push it out. (To avoid damage to the drysuits) This gave us a framework to use to decide when to start worrying.

After a half hour, we knew there had to be cave, after a full hour we decided things were getting interesting, and right at one and a half hours, the intrepid explorers reappeared.

They had laid out 540 feet of hand line (left in the cave) through five airspaces, to a 30 foot square breakdown room. After the second air bell (previously reached by only one diver, Al Swenson) the cave departed from the large open expanse described by all who had dived it, to a more typical cave. Randy and Art had to lay line over, under, around and through breakdown and close spots to continue pushing it out. Upon reaching the breakdown room, Randy removed his tanks to climb across it and observe passage disappearing into water again, on the other side. Deciding that this obstacle would require them to rethink their gear a little for smooth, safe progress, they called it a dive,

and followed the line back out in zero visibility.

They had experienced adequate visibility on the way in, and had spotted two fish of a species they were not able to identify, and one crustacean. They had also seen one bat in the entrance area. They did not notice Doug's left hand side passage, but I'm still convinced by his description of it that it is not anything that was entered either today or previously.

I am convinced that this cave has been waiting for the state of the art of cave diving to evolve. I believe it will yield to modern techniques and equipment. I also believe that to crack it will demand a much more determined effort than it had seen in the past. I am patiently waiting for Randy and Art to hash over their thoughts on this and come up with plans for stage 2 of the Wild Well Project. Good work, you two.

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Settle Creek Cave, Allamakee County, Iowa

January 3, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson and Delores Nelson

The walk up the spring fed tributary of Settle Creek to the cave that bears its name is as beautiful as any you'll take in the state of Iowa. The snug, steep little hollow, the waterfall, the three springs, the little cave with its ice stalagmites, and last but certainly not least, the little rise pool at the rear of the cave, step by step, reward the hiker with their serene wonder. It is a place more ideal for contemplation and the peace of its solitude than the dive I had envisioned into its pool simply in search of more cave. To alter the character of this cave in a search for more passage seems completely at odds to what anyone who calls himself a caver truly values. To dive it for that same purpose seems sacrilegious. Maybe I'm overreacting or just a sentimental sap, you'd have to have experienced things as we did on a fine, clear, cold winter day, rock, pure white snow, and running water. Intrigued as I am by water protected caves, I don't feel particularly compelled to dive this site. It is a place that subtly requests to be appreciated as it is. I can respect that.

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Henkes' Lost Creek Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

January 3, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson and Aaron Nelson

The lead to this sinking stream was given to me by a coon trapper that I met while on the Wild Well trip. He also gave me the lead for the preceeding report on Settle Creek Cave. Unlike Settle Creek, this cave has not been visited before by grotto members. It is reasonable to assume that it is not virgin though, considering the extensive caving done in this area by the Mielkes. It is an intriguing find, and personally gratifying to me, being the first cave I have had the pleasure of adding to the Iowa Cave Index.

Like every land owner I have contacted to date, Mr. Henkes is very curious about this natural feature on his property, but shies away from it. This seems rather natural and sensible.

On the walk down the valley there are two or three springs, depending on how you count them. Water ran from them down to the cliff face/sink. Mr. Henkes explained that when the sink could not take all the water running to it, it would create quite a pond, 'til it rose to the point that it could drain down the original drainage course. The water from these springs ran back about ten feet into the cave before tumbling down between twenty and twenty-five feet of chimneyable verticle passage. The horizontal extent of this waterfall section and the large passage beyond it was 45 to 50 feet. At this point the passage turned into a bellycrawl sized sleazeway.

I intend to get back here at the first opportunity with a wetsuit and proper gear to see if this cave "goes". I hope to do quick but accurate survey at that time also.

Cold Water Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

January 16, 1988

By Mike Lace

Michael Lace, Stacey Cyphert, and Larry Welch

We entered the cave at 12:00 p.m. and headed downstream intending to go to the end of cascade to a dig site but at Guardian's Fangs, the favorite wimping out point, we decided to enter Dead Coon Passage from the Cascade end. Larry had tested his new waterproofed camera by shooting a couple of rolls of film in and around the Gallery but we deposited the photo gear near the Pothole Country Passage. Larry showed us Mud Cone Dome with its collection of rust-red formations. We continued to crawl up Dead Coon Passage to the Toboggan Ride, a side crawlway with a prodigious output of water. Survey reports of this passage indicate that it is flood prone during heavy runoff.

Shortly past the Toboggan Ride we turned right into a watery crawl that supposedly "pinched out". We found a muddy section at the last survey station that had a mud and rock constriction but beyond that point a body-sized crawl could be seen leading approximately twelve feet to a possible dome floor. A cool air flow and a healthy echo told us at the very least it might be a dome. We dug with a trowel for a while but still couldn't squeeze into the virgin crawl; with a bar and a hammer we should be able to slip into it. We exited without incident at 5:30 p.m.

Cold Water Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

January 16, 1988

By Michael Bounk

Steve Moon, Mike Bounk and Chuck _____

We entered the cave at about 11:30 and went upstream to the mouth of Pete's Pipe. Steve and Chuck went up the pipe while I waited on the breakdown at the entrance. This was mainly a main passage tourist trip, so I didn't wear coveralls, and didn't want to tear up my wetsuit.

We went downstream to the big shaft above the main passage just below Pothole Country. On the way there, we went up the passage that you get to by climbing up a mass of flowstone to get to a verticle slot passage.

They went up the slot passage where it narrows, and saw a ? phreatic like ? tube which they pushed to where it became impassable at a rimstone dam. I did not go up it. I just did not feel like it. I don't like to overheat in a wetsuit. We exited at about 4:30 p.m. When we entered the cave the water was 44 degrees F.

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Cold Water Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

January 16, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Bill Nelson and Dave Ecklund

IN: 9:30 a.m. OUT: 8:00 p.m.

This was our most productive trip out to the new section to date. Dave and Sue Ecklund, who are keeping the books and plotting the survey, have dubbed it the Nelson Section. It will be hard to refer to it that way in a modest manner, even though the honor includes my brother Bill, the hardest core part time caver around. Pushing this challenging piece of CWC is virtually the only caving he has done since an initial break in amounting to only a few trips elsewhere in the cave.

Our success is a product of all the previous trips out to the N.S. , the most notable lesson being the one noted in the last report, one torpedoe for each member with only that individual's gear in it, ready to be used. We left the platform at about 9:45 a.m., reached the Spong by 11:00, at a leisurely pace. (It was low enough to drive a hovercraft through.) By 12:30 we had dived both sump areas, slid through to the Little Waterfall Room in The Last Right-Hand Side Passage, doffed and secured our gear, and had started surveying.

By 2:00 p.m. we had surveyed 1062.3' in 15 stations, until both of our compasses fogged up. Had it not been for equipment failure, it is conceivable that we could have surveyed most of the cave that had been explored so far, within four or five hours. As it was, we stopped at the waterfall coming through the breakdown on the right side of the passageway. As Dave and Bill fussed over the book, I probed the breakdown pile and decided it would be worth moving to push the vigorous little stream passage visible beyond.

After poking around the immediate area for a short spell, we blasted off for the breakdown pile with the water gushing through it, at the end of the explored section. On the way out, I couldn't bring myself to pass the smaller right-hand side passage, branching off of this The Last Right-Hand Side Passage. I sent the others on ahead, assuring them that I would catch up shortly. The cave down this way remained walking size for about seventy to eighty feet. It then opened up dramatically to a very large, wide breakdown room about 10' high. This space was, as is usually the case with such rooms, half filled with its own breakdown, but on top of that was a fairly fine, very light colored sand. Off to the right side of the room was a water-course that obviously carried most of the flow during flooding, but the permanent channel was lost beneath the breakdown somewhere further to the right. At the back of the room, about 350 feet in from the L.R-H.S.P., it reappeared briefly before disappearing again. Here it seemed that it was being forced out of a much tighter passage. This was a very fast, cursory inspection, and first impressions are always subject to being found mildly to grossly inaccurate in my personal case. Only a detailed study on the next trip in will determine if I'm getting any better at these observations.

I caught back up with Dave and Bill and soon we reached the breakdown pile. Upon climbing it, Dave pronounced it more than reasonably stable and had no qualms about traversing, provided that none of the odds and ends projecting from the wall were used as hand holds. At the far end of the heap, where the cave was again virgin, was a very large crevice to the right, which Bill climbed up into and pushed back nearly sixty feet, his first virgin cave. He described it as being about 45' high and two to four feet wide. I followed him up to take a peek.

Dave, who had been suffering from a mild stomach ache, declined to take the lead as we left the breakdown area. The cave immediately shrunk to stoopwalk then worse. Dave waited while Bill and I pushed on as the passage degenerated right down to iguana walking stuff. Then it split. I was afraid that we would lose the cave if it split up too much, but luckily the right fork that Bill took soon rejoined the left one I was pushing. He turned back and I continued on a ways. The cave remained about eighteen to twenty inches high and four to five feet wide for as far as I ventured in, and for the next fifty feet that I could see. We both guesstimated distance on our way out and our final tally of virgin cave for the day was between 800 and 900 feet.

We started the return trip at 4:00 p.m., reached the platform by 7:30, and had the gear and ourselves out of the cave at 8:00 p.m. sharp.

For a while, on the way out, I was sort of bummed that the big passage had ended, 'til it occurred to us how fast we had done so much. We were actually all feeling in pretty good shape when we reached the platform, not the usual drug through a knothole condition we returned in. Experience is effectively bringing the Nelson Section in closer. There is still a great deal of work to be done out there, and we do intend to proceed at it in a leisurely manner. Our plan is to mop up all the loose ends in the large part of the find before pushing the small stuff further. By the time we have that much experience under our belts, maybe The Nasty Sump at the terminus of the mainstream passage, reported on last November, won't then seem like one sump too many. That sump appears to be directly under Cold Water Creek. Maybe the cave will stop sumping beyond there...

THE WILD WELL PROJECT

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

January 30, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Randy Kwiatkowski, Art Dahms, Lowell Burkhead, Larry Welch, Mike Lace, Aaron Nelson and Steve Moon

Randy and Art fixed themselves up with side mounted eighty cubic foot tanks, to better cross the breakdown room discovered on their first dive. We assisted them as best we could and saw them into the cave at 1:46 p.m. They intended to be in three hours this time. They used wetsuits this time around.

Once they were in, we did a thorough inspection of most of the property to the south of the Well and found all of the sinks and crevices the land owner had told us about. One of the sinks will be worth a look after the snow melts.

It was an unusually warm day for this time of year, and we saw more than a few mosquitoes that must have slipped out of the cave to fly about over the snow.

It was an odd sight. Luckily, the water only rose nine to twelve inches while they were in, and Randy and Art came bubbling out of the submerged passage way exactly three hours after entering! They had a question between themselves about one of the last measurements on the way out and returned to recount, making a total dive time of three hours and twenty minutes.

Art left his gear on one side of the breakdown room and helped Randy with the slippery job of getting his gear across the room to dive the continuing sump beyond. This was no small task, as the room was somewhat longer than Randy's original estimate, more like 95 feet than 35 feet. Randy soloed into this sump for another 240 feet, laying line through one more room and tying off in yet another before reaching his 1/3rds on both tanks. He spent 24 minutes on this solo dive. The cave was free of breakdown, and in the area of twelve feet wide and three to four feet high and going. The passage trends in the general direction of 80 degrees.

The fish seen on the previous dive were spotted again this trip, and photographed with a camera Steve Moon had sent along for just that purpose. They were identified as being a variety of sucker with mottled skin. Randy and Art got other pictures of themselves that we are waiting on pins and needles for Steve to develop. Unfortunately, they missed a shot of what may have been a fresh water shrimp.

According to Randy's notes, the cave now extends approximately 794 feet through eight crevice airbells and the one large breakdown room. The crevices run nearly parallel to the passage, so that they seemed to enter the crevices on one end and leave on the other. They are diving in only a few feet of water.

Though they didn't visually verify Doug Schmucker's left hand side passage, the figures seem to bare it out. Doug was in less than 150 feet when he reached his second room; Randy's figures show their second room at 184 feet.

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THE WILD WELL PROJECT

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

February 6, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson, Randy Kwiatkowski, Art Dahms, and Lowell Burkhead

After reading the last trip report on the project and checking for accuracy, Randy suggested that I explain the 1/3 rule for the benefit of those unfamiliar with cave diving and its strict rules. The 1/3rds mentioned in the previous report refer to 1/3 of the air being used up, at which point the diver turns around. This gives him 2/3rds of his air supply to exit the cave on. Theoretically, he should have 1/3rd left upon completion of the dive. This is his backup or emergency allotment, his safety margin in the event of the unforeseeable or to share with his buddy should he experience a total air failure. Randy had used 1/3 in only one of his two bottles on that dive.

This dive was very successful, not just in passage that was pushed, but in short cuts that saved time and energy. Speaking of time, this dive got underway at 11:40 a.m. and ended at precisely 3:40 p.m. How they manage to time things right to the minute is beyond me, but I'm beginning to think that they hold up in the first air bell and kill a few minutes if need be to accomplish this.

In the breakdown room, Art discovered a way to skirt the pile, saving about 45 minutes in carrying the tanks over and back. They could wear their side mount tanks and stay in the water, also saving precious energy. They then dived the area soloed by Randy and laid another 110 feet of new line before coming up in "dry" stream passage. This was the first flow detected, aside from the very minor trickle audible to the left side of the entrance. This stream passage was pushed for 315 feet before "going under" again. The sump continues, five feet high, and twelve to fifteen feet wide and is unobstructed.

The dry area had a loop passage that could not be fully traversed, adding about 80 feet to the known length of The Wild Well, and Art added another 30' in a side lead climb to a small dome. Art also commented that there appears to be side leads along the way that will need inspection. This brings the distance from the entrance to over 1200 feet and the total pushed passageway to well over 1300 feet. The cave evidently made a radical turn in the last sump, as it had been trending roughly 80 degrees up to the breakdown room, but Randy observed that the stream room was running about 330 degrees.

The project will be on hold for a while, until Randy and Art can both get time off together again. When that day comes though, we all feel that the Well will yield much more passage.

Henkes' Lost Creek Cave, Clayton County, Iowa
February 6, 1988
Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson and Lowell Burkhead

by Mike Nelson

A short talk with L'Dean Henkes convinced me that my initial impression of this sinking stream cave was well founded. In all that he knew of, no one, not even Gerald Mielke who had caved extensively in the area in the past (developer of Spook Cave and Whompi Cave) had been in it. He was aware of only one person who had even been down close to observe where the stream sank. I'd have sworn simply by the feel of the place that it was virgin cave. L'Dean reassured this feeling

The cold temps had stymied the flow from the seep springs up the valley from the cave, and there was less ice to contend with this trip in. Delores climbed down to the first landing to chat and keep an eye on me as I slid into the low muddy bellycrawl passage that lay at the end of the bigger part of the cave

With most of the water I had seen last time drained away, I had skipped the wetsuit I had intended using. The mud in the crawlway, though, was not packed. It turned to pea soup as I pushed my way in and soaked me quickly. Thirty-five feet in the tight little passage came to a grill work of sticks and a frog who looked determined to hold his ground. Despite wearing polypropylene longies, I was cold. So I left the frog and the stick jam for some nice warm day when I could climb into the wetsuit before climbing into the cave.

The bag I had brought my gear into the cave with, so I could cleverly change into dry, warm clothes before climbing back out into near zero temps proved to be too heavy to handle when refilled with soaked, muddy cave duds. I was forced to wait in embarrassed solitude while Lowell and Delores went back to the cars for ropes to aid in my "rescue".

Cold Water Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

February 16, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Larry Welch, Mike Nelson, Wil Petty, Stephen Hardwick, Danial Werner, David Tavaraz, Alexander B. Williams, Chris Victor, Eric Hippe and Jonathan Andreas

IN: 11:15 a.m. OUT: 5:30 p.m. Total: 6 hours 15minutes

This was the first trip to CWC by Grinnell's GORP group since just prior to the Miller's Cave incident. It took some effort for the group to convince the school fathers of the worthwhile nature of caving as an integral part of the outdoor recreation program. We are glad to have them back, and wish that we could see more of them regularly, even if they come as individuals, independent of the program. Student leader, Wil Petty, won't be in charge too much longer, but some of the others say that they will certainly convince his replacement to follow in his muddy footsteps.

Larry and I took them on a rather ambitious "tourist trip", that got as far downstream as the Well Pipe and upstream to Pete's Pipe. Larry is a fantastic tour leader and did not fail to point out every point of interest and threw in many glimpses of the cave's history and charm gathered from his personal experiences and stories of "the old days".

All of these youths were capable, intelligent, conservation oriented enthusiasts. The majority of them made this trip without wetsuit boots. It makes one rethink their definition of "hardcore caver". All but two of them even got right down in the mud and crawled to Hoot Dome.

We also picked up water samples for Betty Wheeler, who's study of the hydrology of CWC is now getting into a very detailed stage.

Others in the cave this weekend included Betty, George Huppert and Mike Bounk, who were locating sites for the collection of the above mentioned water samples, and Doug Schmuecker who took his friend, Dean Zimmerman, up the Spong, "to hide from Nelson". Imagine trying to hide from me at my home away from home. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Dean had become an instant "Sponger". Some of us are just born to it.

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Kemling Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa

February 27, 1988

By Mike Nelson

Rudy Pruszko, Mike Nelson, Aaron Nelson, Loren Schutt, Ron Laby, David Luner and Karen Kedrowski

IN: 12:15 p.m. OUT: 4:45 p.m.

Aaron and I took the "novice" trip that Rudy led, to get acquainted with the cave and get details and understandings that were not available from any other source. Rudy and the trip he took us on lived up to our expectations.

We got a good feel for this cave that is laid out in a maze composed of passages that intersect at near perfect 90 degree angles, at nearly north/south and east/west directions. Though it is complicated enough to disorientate someone like myself, who has precious little experience outside of stream caves, a compass is about all that would be needed to get one back on the right track.

The cave itself is pure sensory overload. There is just so much variety and detail to be observed in the simple trip that we took, that all the visual treats just could not be absorbed. The more difficult trips taken by other groups were to see features that are as rare and unique as any in the world; this cave has a little of everything! Cave pearls, argonite, boxwork, many more, too much to remember and chronicle, and more than enough to make a caver want to keep coming back.

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Kemling Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa

February 27, 1988

by Larry Welch

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson, Aaron Nelson, John Fuhrman, Doug Schmuecker, Dean Zimmerman, Mike Gerald, Loren Schutt, Mike Lace, Richard Anderson, Stacey Cyphert, Larry Welch, Dave Richardson and trip organizer, Rudy Prusko and 15 others from Wisconsin.

The date chosen for the first Iowa Grotto seasonal trip was a fortuitous decision, as it turned out to be a beautiful day, sunny and near 50 in Dubuque. Everyone met at the E.B. Lyons Nature Center, and Rudy gave the group a historical summary of activity in the cave while we waited for the Wisconsin group.

Kemling is one of the "spar caves", which were originally found by miners looking for lead, which was present as the mineral Galena crystal. The miners moved on and cavers descended upon the beautifully decorated spar caves. Competition between rival caving groups led to landowner problems, and most of the spar caves were closed. At this time Kemling had not been explored as extensively as some of the other caves within the group.

Rudy became friendly with the cave owner in the late 70's, and eventually was allowed a trip into the cave in 1979. That owner has since passed away, but his heirs are allowing Rudy access to the cave under the same terms as before. Exploration in the past few years has found a considerable amount of new passage, and plans are in the works for a survey of the cave.

Since there were so many of us and so few of Rudy, we ended up splitting into several groups and having to trust the group leader with a copy of the sketch map to find his way around properly. There was a novice group, a group going to see some boxwork, another group tried to find a den of long soda straws, and two groups looking for cave pearls. As this statement implies, the formations are profuse in this cave. None of the formations were monstrous, yet there were small and delicate gems throughout the cave. One passage was lined with helectites and another was lined with tiny anthodite needles. The crawlway leading to the "Winterwood Squeeze" had long stretches of popcorn on its ceiling, and a balcony off the Big Room had tight clusters of stalactites in Carlsbad-like fashion.

The cave is a maze of passages that are oriented almost due north-south and east-west. It was kind of fun seeing a cave you can get lost in, and we did indeed manage to get lost. On the way back to the entrance, two groups ended up in the same crevice and a long discussion ensued trying to determine where we were and which way lead onward. I was lounging at the back of the pack with Mike Lace when we decided to turn around and we were now leading the group. I had been occupied taking photos on the way in and had no idea which way to go. We ended up finding our way back by air currents, footprints, and distinctive formations.

Everyone got pretty wet and muddy due to snowmelt running into the cave, but all seemed to have enjoyed the trip. Special thanks to Rudy Pruszko for organizing and leading the trip.

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Massillon Park Caves, Cedar County, Iowa

February 28, 1988

Larry Welch and Mike Lace

by Larry Welch

Mike and I both had recently obtained verticle equipment, and were eager to do some actual in-cave work. The Massillon Park Caves seemed about the closest pits to Iowa City, so we headed there on a warm and sunny Sunday morning.

We found a group of three open pits in the park and a fourth that was clogged with debris. We rigged a 20 footer that could be chimneyed easily first, figuring it was best to start on a tame pit. We each rappelled it using a body rappel and Burkhead Safety Rack, and ascended with our inchworm rigs. The pit had a room at its base and a couple of crawlways, but we were more interested in ropework so I did just a cursory look at them.

The second pit was rigged off a tree dirrectly over the pit, allowing a much freer drop down its 30 feet of depth. The downside of the rigging over the pit was that it was difficult to get started and difficult to finish, and some less-than-elegant methods had to suffice. By the time we each had dropped the pit twice it was dripping pretty heavily and we were wet so called it a day. We had of cource recalled what had happened on this day last year, so were very safety-conscious at all times.

My car had a flat, and in the process of repair we met a local fellow who said one of the pits has a large adjoining room with a sizeable bat colony. We'll have to check this out next time.

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The following Iowa Grotto constitution is reprinted from Vol VII No 6 of the INTERCOM. There is room in this issue due to the use of smaller print. Space was also gained by dropping the wide margin that was on both edges of each page and now is only on the bound side where it is needed. The margin gain was, however, used or traded for double spacing between paragraphs. The change in type size saved four pages in this issue, six pages with the cut and tape method of some of the recent issues. (Some of you may know that Nov-Dec 1971, Vol VII No 6 of the INTERCOM is one of the back issues that hasn't been published.)

Most of our members have never seen the constitution and the way the grotto is being run reflects that. I hope that with each member having a copy, we will conform to it or make the necessary changes to the document.

Lowell Burkhead

Constitution of the Iowa Grotto of the
National Speleological Society

- I. The name of this organization shall be the Iowa Grotto of the National Speleological Society.
- II. The purpose of the Iowa Grotto shall be the same as those of the National Speleological Society with the additional purpose of organizing NSS members in the Iowa area to better promote the objectives of the Society.
- III. Executive Committee
 1. The Iowa Grotto shall be governed by an Executive Committee made up of the following elected and appointed officers. The elected officers and their duties are as follows:
 - a) Chairman - presides over all general and executive committee meetings; is responsible for organizing meeting programs; shall assist other officers as needed.
 - b) Vice-chairman - performs the duties of the chairman in the absence of the chairman; is chairman of the greeting committee; is in charge of public relations and press releases.
 - c) Secretary-treasurer - keeps minutes and attendance records of all general meetings; performs all financial duties for the Iowa Grotto; shall be in charge of the Grotto Library; shall perform necessary correspondence and keep pertinent records.

The above elected officers shall appoint the following members of the Executive Committee, with duties as follows.

- d) Trip Coordinator - notifies the membership of trips; coordinates rides for the trips; appoints trip leader; plans cave conservation, mapping, scientific, and other projects.
 - e) Publications Director - is responsible for meeting publication deadlines; collecting necessary material for publications.
 - f) Safety Coordinator - organizes rescue teams when needed; arranges for training on safety practices and rescue techniques; keeps a current list of membership addresses and telephone numbers.
2. The Executive Committee shall have complete power to manage the business of the Iowa Grotto; to formulate by-laws; to raise the funds in any manner not inconsistent with the policies of the National Speleological Society; and to perform all other necessary and expedient functions.
3. Decisions or actions of the Executive Committee may be overruled by a 2/3 vote of the members of the Iowa Grotto.
4. Grotto officers shall be elected annually or whenever necessary to fill a vacancy by a method decided upon by the Executive Committee.

IV. Meetings

1. Executive Committee and general meetings shall be held at such times and places as are determined by the Executive Committee.
2. A petition signed by 1/3 of the membership of the Iowa Grotto shall be mandatory upon the Executive Committee to call a special meeting for the purposes stated in the petition.

- V. A Greeting Committee of at least three people shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. Its duties are as follows: to welcome visitors and new members and to acquaint them with the grotto membership; to pass out literature to visitors concerning grotto internal functions; to contact non-active members and prospective members; to plan recruiting programs.
- VI. It is grotto policy that all trips shall have a trip leader. The responsibilities of the trip leader are to get necessary clearance from cave owners; to assess the capabilities of his party and make decisions accordingly; to maintain grotto conservation and preservation policies; to give direction to the efforts of the party; to see that a written report of the trip is made within two weeks.
- VII. Membership
1. The membership of the Iowa Grotto shall consist of persons interested in speleology and members of the NSS.
 2. No NSS member will be refused membership upon application.
 3. Grotto members who for any reason are no longer NSS members can not run for office or vote in grotto elections.
- VIII. Grotto dues will be set by the Executive Committee.
- IX. The Iowa Grotto constitution can be ammended by a 2/3 favorable vote of the grotto membership.
- X. The constitution and by-laws of the National Speleological Society shall be binding upon the Iowa Grotto. Any action inconsistent therewith shall be null and void.
- XI. In the event of the disbanding of the Iowa Grotto, the property and records of the Iowa Grotto shall be turned over to the National Speleological Society until such time as reactivation of the Iowa Grotto seems feasible.

NSS13068

