

October 1988

Intercom, Volume 24, No. 5, September-October 1988

Lowell Burkhead

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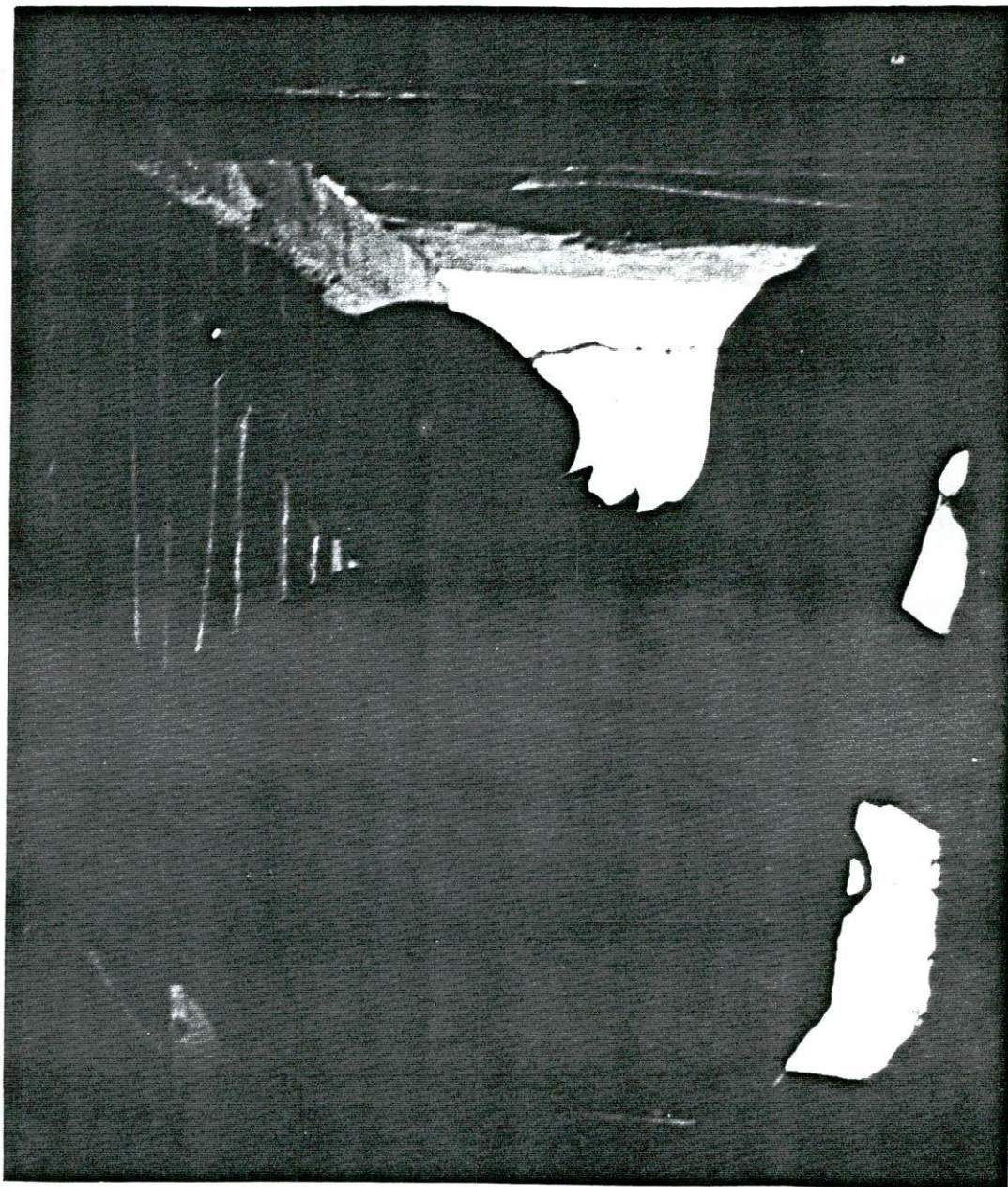
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Published Semi-spasmodically By

THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society

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Volume XXIV Issue 5

September — October 1988

September October 1988

Vol 24 No 5

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.

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Cover Photo: Chimneying Muenster Shaft, the entrance to
Muenster Cave in Dubuque, Iowa, Nov. 6, 1960.
Photo by James "Ed" Smith



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

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

Volume Twenty-Four

Issue Five

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GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting September 28, 1988

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. with four members and one guest attending. The Treasurer's report included a balance of \$237.63.

TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported on the Sept. 4th trip to April Cave where he, Mike Nelson, and Larry Welch began a side passage survey, beginning at chip #19 in the mainstream. They netted approximately 40 meters and noted a going side lead. The September Coldwater Cave weekend saw a tourist trip led by Scott Dankof and including Mike Mosch and a friend. Larry Welch also led Dick Ames downstream to examine the prominent side passages. While in the First Right Hand Side Passage they noticed that, due to recent dry weather, the sump was partially open. FUTURE TRIPS: The Fall Grotto Trip to Dutton's Cave Park was indefinitely postponed due to the lack of trip leaders. The October Coldwater weekend may include a trip to push the First Right Hand Side Passage. Loren Schutt plans to lead a resurvey trip to Hatfield Cave in late October.

OLD BUSINESS: A letter was received from Jim Hedges explaining that the map reproduction for upcoming INTERCOMs will be delayed but will eventually be completed. NEW BUSINESS: Upcoming Grotto officer elections and the lack of willing candidates was discussed. Mike Bounk announced that he will not be running for re-election to the office of Chairman. An associate editor for the Sept/Oct issue of the INTERCOM is still needed. The possibility of having occasional Grotto meetings at Coldwater Cave was discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Regular Meeting October 26, 1988

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. with six members present. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read. The Treasurers report listed a balance of \$249.30. TRIP REPORTS: Larry Welch, Mike Nelson and Bill Nelson continued the Coldwater mainstream resurvey and extended it to the First Right Hand Side Passage. FUTURE TRIPS: Due to the unusually low water levels, the November Coldwater weekend may include a trip upstream to Thunder Dome and the Rumble Passage or a trip downstream to the First Right Hand Side Passage to push the siphon. Mike Bounk will be leading a non-caving trip to Maquoketa Caves State Park for the University of Iowa Geology Department. OLD BUSINESS: Criss Gilbert volunteered to act as the associate editor of the INTERCOM for the Sept/Oct issue. Old issues of the INTERCOM are scheduled to be printed. NEW BUSINESS: Nominations for Grotto offices were accepted and the following individuals were named: Chairman: Mike Lace, Vice Chairman: Lowell Burkhead, Secretary-Treasurer: Larry Welch. Since there were no other nominations, balloting was deemed unnecessary. These individuals will take office on January 1, 1989. It was suggested that the 1988 annual report should be completed as soon as possible and that it should include the names of the 1989 officers. Membership dues were discussed and the following revision was proposed and passed: single membership = \$10.00 while family membership = \$10.00 with an optional \$2.00 per family member to be included on the membership list. It was reported that the Grotto now has a 24-hour cave rescue assistance number. Doug Schmucker has primarily been responsible for this rescue organization effort. It was suggested that anyone who makes it to the NCRC Rescue Seminar at Mark Twain Cave (Hannibal, Mo.) should give a brief program at a future Grotto meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

COME-ALONG SPRING

Clayton County, Iowa

August 4, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson, and Greg McCarty

While searching for the landowner of the collapsed resurgence of the largest spring in The Valley of the Seven Springs, we found that we had passed beyond the bounds of the permission granted by our initial contact. That's an easy enough thing to do, especially when the lead takes one into an ungrazed area where the tall weeds confine one to walking in the streambed. The owner, when eventually located, was more than happy to allow us to dig away at the collapse in search of a cave. We came in from upstream this time, which brought us in through a grove of over 1500 young walnut trees planted by the landowner. What an investment in the future! They were spaced just right and the canopy of the existing woods will force them to grow straight and tall. They'll make nice boards someday when it's time to thin them out a little, and they'll probably be worth their weight in gold.

We had moved a little rock on that first trip here, to determine if the lead was worth pursuing. There were several rocks that would take three men to move, if three men could find room to move in the basin we had excavated. So instead of taking a chance of hurting ourselves, I had brought along a come-along and a couple of lengths of chain. These made short easy work of the large slabs and then Greg and I cleaned away the smaller rocks and mud and the like as my wife, Delores, watched. She wanted to get muddy, there just wasn't room for three of us to work.

Despite the debris that we managed to drop into the rise pool we were creating, the spring had enough flow to clear itself, and after a couple of hours of work, we were able to get a glimpse into the cavity beyond. As it is now, there is a tight bend into a tight slot in about 2½ feet of water. The floor seemed to bow right back up within eight feet or so. It gave the impression of rising to an airspace directly, but the tightness of the opening caused me to push out a good cloud of silt in front of me. It was getting late and we wanted to report in to the landowner before it got too dark, so we left Come-Along Spring at this inconclusive but promising stage.

COLDWATER CAVE

Winneshiek County, Iowa

August 20, 1988

by Mike Lace

Larry Welch, Mike Lace and Scott Dankof

Larry and I had returned to Coldwater Cave to continue the resurvey of the mainstream passage. We had hoped to recruit at least two more people for this task but due to a sparse turnout this weekend, Scott Dankof was the only other person at the shack. The three of us descended the shaft at approximately 11:00 a.m., finding the water level still at an unusually low 7.4 inches. Scott travelled downstream with us through Pothole Country until he decided to call it a day. He opted to solo back to the shaft while testing out his new flash units. A month later we learned that Scott had contracted a sinus infection and bronchitis - an excellent reason not to stand around in a damp wetsuit on a survey trip.

We continued through the downstream breakdown section and found the chip that was left on the previous survey trip. We knew that the Swim was just ahead and that surveying through it with only two people would be a real treat. Upon reaching the deep stuff, we were able to shoot cleanly over the first section to a rimstone dam that stretched across the passage. The following stations, although a little less comfortable, proved to be easier than expected.

On the way through the breakdown, I had twisted my ankle on a slick rock but had been able to carefully continue. Once we approached the palette formation, however, walking became a little more uncomfortable so Larry and I decided to exit the cave, just to be on the safe side. It was disappointing to quit this early but we found that we had completed 1100 feet of survey; not bad for a day's work. We exited the cave at approximately 6:00 p.m.

A. J. SPRING CAVE

Allamakee County, Iowa

A complete history by Mike Nelson

April 2, 1988 Spotted several springs late in the day at the end of a long weekend of caving and lead checking.

April 17, 1988 We checked into all the springs encountered on 4-22-88. A. J. was the most promising. Landowner's name and number were acquired.

May 22, 1988

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson, Aaron Nelson, Mike Lace, Larry Welch, Greg McCarty

We looked at some sinkholes first, with the land owner, as always, out of curiosity. We were also killing time, as his wife wanted to be there for the diving. There was a series of crevice related sinks, of which one was enterable, but for no great depth or distance.

He told us to go ahead with the diving, as we had not actually coordinated well and he wasn't certain of his wife's time of returning from church. He then volunteered his services in hauling the gear to the site. We loaded up the basic stuff on the platform he had on the rear of his little tractor, and headed for the spring.

As I was getting ready, I handed the flashlight and goggles around for the others to see what we had seen on our initial peek into A. J. Spring. Greg stuck his head in deepest, even deeper than Doug or I had back on 4-17-88, when first evaluating it. He came out of the water somewhat excited, raving about the big passage. Getting right down in the water, I took a better look-see myself, and sure enough there was more cave on a level look back than I had imagined, and less downward than I had imagined.

Very excited now, I finished putting on the dive gear. I used two mini-pony tanks that were rigged up just for peeking around in the cavern (daylight) area of the cave. Not even a full body into the resurgence (working with a base fed line on my wrist) I spotted enough reflection to know there was a good airspace available. Scooting back out, I informed the rest of the team.

The bigger part of the reflection was parallel with the cliff face, but there was a narrow piece angling off above large submerged passage. I dived in for a good look. About 12 feet in, I came up in a joint oriented passage in 2½ feet of water and about four feet of air. It was just under arms width. The dry part was about 12 feet long. Some of this was not visible from outside but some of the cave continued underwater, creating the illusion of really big cave. I tried to work my way back to look at where the reflection had narrowed. I could see that there was pushable air filled passage, but the line had become stuck on something, and I couldn't determine how much. I ducked out again and we went about fetching the serious dive gear.

This time in I tied off the jump line to a rock and let myself in. I quickly but carefully tied off inside the cave, leaving the line for future use. The cave, once away from the joint aligned room, held a constant eight feet wide and four feet high. The narrow area of the reflection was just over head size above the water line and continued in another fifteen feet or so. Here, just beyond the visibility of the entrance sump, was a breakdown room, still eight feet wide. Climbing over the breakdown for about twenty feet, I found the cave going under again. Sticking my head in the second sump, I observed it pulling the classic enticement. The cave rounded a curve to the right, wide open, a constant eight feet by four feet. I could see twelve to fifteen feet yet.

I imagine that it is to my own benefit that caution overwhelms me when working solo like this, but this cave was not in the least bit intimidating. There was no real reason not to go get the bigger line real and line markers and another light source or two and push this out a ways. So I really surprised myself when, upon returning to the outside world, I called the diving for the day. Sure, it's great to have a partner when doing things like this, but mostly for someone to share the experience with and know there is immediate back up. That's reassuring. The sump diver though, should not be dependent upon a partner to save his butt. Then there's the real concern of demonstrating to the land owner that we are going about things in a calm calculated manner. I am not a thrill seeking risk taker, but after several days of contemplation, I realized that the reason I did not progress was the subconscious awareness of the intoxicating effect of virgin cave. It is one thing to deal with this in big dry cave, or for that matter, tight little passages. It is a totally different story underwater. It would be all too easy to get in all too deep. The cave diving philosophy is to make repeated dives to become familiar with submerged cave a little at a time. It's a good philosophy.

Another solo push dive is in the works for the immediate future. This cave that is big by comparison to its spring resurgence will not let me sleep.

FIRST LIGHT AND A SURPRISE

A. J. Spring Cave
Allamakee County, Iowa
May 30, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson and Greg McCarty

In the previous trip report, I forgot to make mention of one very important item; landowner relations. The folks that own A. J. Spring Cave have been extremely hospitable toward us. They've hauled our gear to the site with their tractor. They've been on hand at every step of the exploration so far. They've even fed us picnic lunches. They are evidently as interested as we about what lies beyond the spring's resurgence.

They show this by allowing us to work the site intensely, despite making it clear that the place was their little hideaway, and that they didn't want to be overrun, or well known. In this light, we are keeping the personnel to the bare requirements from here on out. There is precious little anyone else can do to help anyway.

This dive allowed me to be a little more exacting on proportions than the first, as always. The resurgence sump was right around ten feet; the first airbell about ten to twelve feet; as per my previous estimate, the low airspace area was somewhat shorter than it first seemed as was the breakdown room. The second sump seems roughly fifty feet in.

Greg McCarty followed me through to this part of the cave, making this his first cave dive in over a decade. We reexamined the established line before going to the second sump to tie on again.

I intended to go in to the second sump slow, looking for natural tieoffs to keep the handline out of harms way. The nature of the passage changed so radically though, that I pushed on in to explore. As noted in the last report, the cave was about eight feet wide and four feet tall in this sump, but once around the first meander it went tall. The width remained at least my arm's span, over six feet. The height varied from the holes in the floor and the ceiling, the relief between the highest and lowest spots being about ten feet. If it were dry, the passage would be almost all walking size. I must have been moving at a depth of about four feet as I don't recall having to presurize at all. Nitches in the ceiling that rose $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' to 3' had no air in them. The most unexpected sight was what appeared to be potholing in the floor, a feature associated with stream-bed passages. I did not think to look for evidence of speleothems.

I wound through several meanders and found no good natural tieoff points. As I came around a sharp lefthand turn, the passage straightened out as far as was visible in this, the first light ever to shine in its hallway. I wanted to go with it so badly. I recognized the feeling and knew I had to leave. One last look back and I turned to go, and snared my line on my backup tank pressure gauge. Even though I messed with it for a short time, I did not manage to totally destroy the visibility. I still had two to three feet as I picked up my line by hand and worked my way back to Greg in the breakdown room.

We both went back out to inform the owners and crew of the unexpected good fortune we had encountered. Stringing out the line, I found that I had gone 65' in a dive that only lasted four minutes. But what intense four minutes they were. I had expected the passage to remain bedding plane opening for a long way. Cold-water Cave was low and wide and April Cave was very low and proportionately wide. But here, behind this little spring was walking cave within 60' of the entrance! If it wasn't completely filled with water, that is. It is so much different of an entrance area that it probably isn't likely to act as those other two caves did. But if it enlarges in manners similar to the two longest spring caves in the state, the potential is fantastic.

Another aspect that makes this cave a treat to work is that it's a clean cave. It was observed that on subsequent dives much less silt was dislodged from the ceiling of the resurgence sump. In the second sump the floor had mud right behind the breakdown, but once away from it, it was almost all bedrock. As I was progressing, I'd look back over my shoulder, where I assumed there would be zero visibility behind me and I could see eight to ten feet. Once I was through the meanders, the visibility was limited only by the power of my light.

I feel safe in saying I was viewing 25 to 35 feet beyond the point of penetration. Even stopping to mess with the line didn't totally wipe out the visibility. I'm hoping that the percolation, the dislodging of loose materials from the ceiling, will make it less prone to dirty up the cave with each dive.

Now that we have what appears to be going cave passage, we are gearing up for serious efforts. That next venture will be more slowly and carefully executed. Lines will be lain properly and permanently. We will be ready to do repetitive dives to methodically push this passage, hopefully to where it will "come up". As line is lain and it becomes necessary to move farther faster, we have the room to go to the standard cave diving gear, including fins and BCs.

A FOULED UP BUT SUCCESSFUL DIVE

A. J. Spring Cave
Allamakee County, Iowa
June 4, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Doug Schmuecker, Mike Nelson and Delores Nelson

The successful part of this dive was easy enough to determine. The criteria for a successful dive is that all the divers came back. The foul ups were all mine, things that a bright diver would have figured out before hand, but I had to discover by making the mistakes.

Doug and I ducked into the airspace and got back to the sump. We tied on the line and I took in one drop weight to use in the event that I could not find natural points to tie to. The intent of this dive was to secure a permanent hand line to use in pushing out the submerged portion of this cave. If I had to use weights, I would make a separate trip in and out for each one. Traveling much slower than on the first dive (5-22-88), I found a good "natural" at the first tight turn to the left. This is where I started "learning". I laid the reel and the weight on a ledge by the tie off point, but failed to lock the spool. While attempting to tie to the protrusion, I knocked the reel off the shelf. No big deal, I thought, even though I was losing the visibility. I had observed the depth of the floor and was sure I could pick it up to finish the knot. Unfortunately, there was a crevice where the reel went down. To keep things terse, I'll just say that it took numerous dives to finally retrieve the reel, by means of pulling out every last inch of line on it, before I could bring it up to within reach. Needless to say, nothing of importance was accomplished this day.

Back on the bright side though, I did get to try out different gear in different combinations. I've gotten things pretty much streamlined and down to basics. I also probably doubled my actual time spent in the overhead environment and got much more comfortable in it. (Except for diving in Roubidoux Spring and Wild Well, all my dives have been duckunders that never kept me submerged for more than two to four minutes.) I like A. J. Spring Cave and diving it is rewarding, even the snafus. All in all though, I had the most success on the first dive by just going for it. Only caution cut that dive short. I feel that the things I learned on that dive and this will allow me to use my original tactics with a different combination of gear to make deeper explorations on the next dive.

A. J. Spring Cave

June 26, 1988

Mike Nelson, Aaron Nelson and Greg McCarty

by Mike Nelson

Greg and I peeled off the 370 feet of small diameter line that came on my dive reel and replaced it with 120 feet of 1/8th inch nylon, all that it could hold. I had no qualms about working with the original line, but the new stuff was confidence inspiring. You can still feel it in your hand when you're not moving.

I soloed into the airspace and tied on. I took adequate time to look around better this trip. The sump made a hard right turn at first and continued mildly to the right for 30 feet. This is where I wasted all the time and energy on the last dive playing games with the reel. The crevice I had dropped it into was a joint aligned extension of the sharp left that the passage made here. At the height that I was working, it indented the right wall for several feet. Six to eight feet lower, where I had dropped the reel, the passage continued on out of sight.

Thirty-five feet farther down the tunnel, to the point of previous penetration, was the next sharp left. This ran straight for thirty feet and made yet another sharp left. I noted that there was a deposit of fine grained sand at the corner.

I intended to leave plenty of line on the spool of the reel, to be sure that it would rewind, but ended up unwinding it more than was prudent to get a look around the righthand turn. This was roughly 110 feet in. The cave ran straight for another thirty feet and appeared to make another right.

The only air I saw was that which I had left on earlier trips. I should have made the effort to tie on the line and not just reel it out. I didn't. With my light just floating free on its lanyard, pointing in no particular direction, I could still see to operate the reel and two or three feet of the line. Either I'm getting better at not stirring up the silt or my hunch that the percolation that cleaned loose material from the cave ceiling would make for progressively cleaner conditions was correct. Hopefully, it was some combination of the two

On the next dive I will either go back to the original line, or use a larger reel that Greg is constructing that will hold a more generous amount of the thicker line.

A. J. Spring Cave

August 4, 1988

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson and Greg McCarty

by Mike Nelson

I took another dive into A. J. with just over 200 feet of 1/8" line at my disposal. As always, I had felt confident in really getting somewhere this try, but the realities of this line of cave exploring are a bit different when on the scene, as opposed to contemplating them while still at home.

I moved on past the 100 foot mark that I had attained at the limits of the reel I used on my last dive. The cave appeared to be rising at the next corner.

When I reached it, however, there was no air as yet. There was a good sized joint aligned room, though, that reached ten feet or so to the left past the corner. There were two sharp rights in a row here and the passage gave the distinct feel of almost running into itself. It must come close to paralleling itself for a ways. Beyond these last two righthand turns the passage got wider and lower, maybe ten to twelve feet by three to four feet.

If it was over excitement that caused me to abort that first dive, then it was being over calm that caused me to turn around on this one, at around 160 to 170 feet. The cave seemed to be trending upwards at the next corner, about 20 feet ahead, where it turns back left again.

SATISFIED AT LAST

A. J. Spring Cave
Allamakee County, Iowa
August 28, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson, Delores Nelson and Greg McCarty

This was my sixth dive into A. J. Spring Cave. My exploits are not the stuff that cave legends are made of. If the reports, to this point, have an air of any kind, I hope it is of extreme caution. To this point my cave diving experience has consisted of several breath hold exploratory dives and 26 sump dives. (Two of these into Roubidoux Spring, Waynesville, Missouri, are the only ones that can actually be called "cave dives".) I have made three dives with people who have had more experience at this than me. The NSS Cave Diving Section literature recommended 25 dives with a more experienced cave diver before diving on ones own. Of these dives, 18 have been solo. Of these, the majority have been into virgin passage, usually to a distance of not more than 40 feet, at which point I turned back if air had not been encountered. These have been nontechnical dives in water always less than 10 feet deep and within a breath of surface (with the exception of three of the dives into A. J.) All of this is to say that I don't believe I'm being foolhardy. A. J. has presented me with what may be a very unique cave and a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore and search for large, going, dry cave, which is actually what all of this is being done for.

This brings us up to the latest dive. Every dive before this one had left me with the feeling that I could have and should have done more. The demands of scoping out virgin underwater passage for hazards had precluded accurate reading of the line reel and memorizing passage features. By this dive I was getting accustomed to what I was doing. I also adopted a varied form of the reasoning used by steel workers, "Anything over 20 feet up (beyond free diving abilities) and height (distance from air) doesn't matter any more".

Everything "clicked" on this trip. I kept accurate count of distances and related them to turns and close spots. I monitored my air pressure gauge better and for the first time took periodic depth readings. From the last passage before the joint aligned room to the farthest point reached so far, the cave seemed to be trending slightly upward. So I was truly surprised to find that I was in five feet of water yet. This was at 150 feet into the sump. While checking out all these details, I managed to snag and then un snag myself from the line.

I scanned the passage ahead before going on and noticed something rather out of place on the ceiling. It was my homemade neoprene boot for my 40 cubic foot tank!

When I couldn't find it before the dive, I had thought that I had just misplaced it. I obviously had dislodged it on the previous trip. Latching onto it and keeping track of it for the rest of the trip in and out was a minor but extra piece of task loading that I was glad to be able to take in stride.

Moving forward I was in cave that remained about 12 feet wide with a ceiling and floor that were coming together as the passage looked to be making its first gentle turn, to the left. I was working my way over a breakdown pile covered with the first real mud I had encountered in the cave. I was positive I was seeing the underwater reflection of surface ahead and proceeded over the breakdown/mud bank.

Once over the bank, the floor dropped and the ceiling rose. The floor was sand again. Down and slightly to the right the passage looked as though it should go, but there was a sand plug. I looked to the left and there was no cave there either. It made no sense, considering the tremendous amount of water that had to occasionally pass through here to keep things open and clean. Rolling onto my side and looking up I saw what people with more cave knowledge than I claim had to be a solutionally enlarged joint. My impression, at that time and still, was of looking up into the bottom of a true crevice. Air was visible about two feet up it. I gave two half hearted attempts at pushing myself up into it, but decided to familiarize myself with the way out of the last bit of virgin cave I had pushed. I was 200 feet into the sump, had spent three or four minutes in this last "room" and my air was nearing the 1/3 level.

As I started back over the mud bank, I experienced the first zero visibility in A. J. On all of the earlier trips, shining my light ahead while leaving the cave caused the same kind of glare that driving with high beams in fog does. Letting my light float on it's lanyard, it's diffuse beam allowed me visibility past the end of my arms and reel and usually a couple of feet of the line. I was in pitch black as the cave began to squeeze me. Then my harness snagged. Of course, laying there in that situation, the first thought to come into my mind was "well, you've gone and done it now". Less conscious was the thought "are your friends ever gonna be pissed about having to come drag yer carcass out of here". These are totally natural thoughts that deserve to be ignored. I unhooked the harness, reeled some line and worked over in the direction where the passage had to be bigger. Then I stuck on my backup lights. Releasing them I worked my way over the rest of the pile and back into familiar cave. That didn't matter, though. I still huffed and puffed my way out of the cave using considerably more air than I had coming in. I hauled up into the air filled room, glad to see the light of my support man Greg. (Who, by the way, had followed me in for about 90 feet to look around.) I had been in 20 minutes, used 800 lbs of air in and 1200 lbs coming out, exiting with exactly 1/3 left.

As the title suggests, this was the first dive into A. J. Spring Cave in which I was totally satisfied with my performance. I had done all I could reasonably expect to do, and a little more. I had negotiated all the passage possible, with my level of experience, safely monitored my progress and air consumption, added unexpected tasks, performed unpracticed maneuvers (attempting to explore the crevice) while staying out of my line, encountered "challenges" in zero vis, and delt with them. I also came out of the cave with more than an inkling of all that I do not know of what I'm doing. I'm putting the check in the mail today for deposit on my cavern and basic cave diving courses in Florida this winter.

A. J. Spring Cave is truly an enigma. After fast thaws and big rains, the flow from it has filled its stream banks with water a couple of feet deep and six to eight feet wide. Under normal conditions its discharge is mere gallons per minute. The rise pool is a pitiful three to four feet in circumference and only 2½ or so feet deep. The entrance is close with side mounted gear. Once inside it should be a shallow muddy mess, but it is large and beautifully sculptured cave. (By Iowa standards) At approximately 255 feet, it's one of the longest caves in Allamakee County. But what is going on in there and where is the rest of the solutional passage? There is a large deep crevice 30 feet into the main sump. It could bring in a lot of water but would have little effect on keeping the rest of the cave as clean as it is. Could the horizontal passage continue vertically offset up the crevice/solutionally enlarged joint? Could the apparent sand filled plug be backing up water until it reaches a point that it has enough pressure to blast out the plug and flush the entire cave clean? NSS News, 4-87, Turkey-The Mystery of Atlin Besik Duedensuyu Magarasi- The Basket of Gold) A possibility, but not too likely. I may have to go in for one more look see before winter sets in, but will save any attempt at pushing up the crevice until after I get some schooling.

Looking at the topo map, a conservative estimate would put 100 feet of rock over A. J. and under Miller's Cave, (The second deepest pit entrance cave in the state at 107 feet) three miles away on the plateau above. There is room for a little bit of theoretical cave in between. Iowa is not famous for its caves, but its caves really ought to be famous for their challenges.

THE JFI PASSAGE SURVEY

April Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
Mike Lace, Larry Welch and Mike Nelson

September 4, 1988
by Mike Lace

Stacey Cyphert and Larry arrived at the cave to find the rest of our party ready but cautiously willing to enter the cave on this drizzling, cloudy morning. We all agreed that a trip through the siphons to the Nemo Dome section was out of the question with the apparent threat of rain but a trip to begin the survey of the side passage at chip #19 was a safe and worthwhile goal.

Delores Nelson, Stacey and Lowell Burkhead decided to do some surface work while Mike, Larry and I suited up and pushed toward the chip #19 passage. We made fairly good time through the section downstream of the Boom Room and soon found ourselves at the gravel bank outside of the Black Slime Sewer Passage where we took a welcome breather. Chip #19 was found several hundred feet upstream and we wasted no time in passing around the survey equipment and beginning the day's work. Mike took the lead tape position, Larry took forward compass readings, and I took the book.

The first few stations were set in a four foot high narrow passage with about a foot of water to slosh through; soon after that, however, the ceiling dipped down to within a few feet of the floor and was studded with ornate clusters of soda straws. Occasional gravel banks made the crawl a little more comfortable but the dense patches of soda straws still forced you to belly crawl in a few spots. The belly crawling soon became the only option as we reached a pool of water and a small, partially mud-filled side passage that led to the right. Mike crawled ahead and over a rimstone dam that had a small spout draining the pooled water behind it.

A chip was set shortly beyond this point while Larry pushed into the muddy side passage for approximately 30 feet to find that it continued to wind ahead of him. Digging would probably be necessary but it definitely looks promising. We also noticed a bat flying in and out of the surveyed passage as soon as we began the survey. The poor little guy was so confused by our presence that he mistook the bill of Larry's helmet for a ledge. The passage was too low for a bat to roost in comfortably so we may find ourselves in a dome as we continue to explore this well decorated and potentially "going" lead.

We quickly totaled up our survey to find that we had netted over 40 meters and surpassed the 2.5 km mark. We collected ourselves and exited the passage after naming it the "JFI Passage". We exited the cave at approximately 7:30 p.m.

CRASHING THROUGH THE BRAMBLES

Above April Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
 Lowell Burkhead, Stacey Cyphert, Delores Nelson
 Aaron Nelson and Babe, the three legged wonder dog.

September 4, 1988

by Lowell Burkhead

We hadn't planned on doing surface work, we had just wimped out on going in the cave. We sat around in the shelter for a while after the others had gone in the cave. The rain didn't amount to enough to get the woods wet so we decided to go look for the sink that that piece of wood in the last issue had come in through. With cave map in hand, we set off up the hill and into the woods. We were following the compass needle toward the recent finds off Nemo Dome. We quickly found that the compass didn't follow any of the numerous trails that cut through the woods. Every time we would cross a trail, Babe would start down it thinking that we would follow but when we never did, she finally started following us. We had to estimate the distances but Stacey and I agreed pretty well although we both could have been way off. We started coming across sink holes, small ones at first then real ones. We checked every one but didn't find any with an open hole or even good bedrock showing. We finally did find one with an open hole in dirt on the edge of the woods right next to where the road used to go in to the woods. We went on out into the field and found the road and hiked back down to the shelter.

That was just Stacey and Babe and I. Later we all went back to that sink in the edge of the woods and dug for a while. It looked less and less promising the more we dug. We abanded that dig and headed back to where we could have missed some sinks. We found a few more but none worth while. We followed one of the large ravines back down the hill and came out just down from the pond. We were hoping to find a leak in the revine but it didn't happen. Babe showed us that three wheel drive could go anywhere that we could.

Our trip and the one in the cave both gave up fairly early. We all stopped to visit with Lester and Edie on the way out to tell them what we had been up to.

THE IOWA GROTTO IS NOW IN THE CAVE RESCUE BUSINESS

Doug Schmuecker has organized the grotto into the preliminary stages of a real rescue team. At this time, we are presenting ourselves as cavers that will assist with rescues in caves, not a full-blown rescue team. This type of service can be a great asset to local agencies. A stuck caver, or missing local teens can be a major problem without experienced cavers.

Doug and the Iowa County Emergency Disaster Services where he works are getting the word out to emergency agencies in north-east Iowa and we are now on the National Cave Rescue Coordination list and can be contacted through the Air Force Reserve Coordination Center. Iowa County Emergency Management has the Iowa Grotto "Rescue Team" call down list and will handle any emergency call out. The following people are on that list:

Doug Schmuecker	Steve Moon
Mike Bounk	Mike Lace
Rudy Pruszko	Stacey Cyphert
Mike Nelson	Gary Engh
Warren Netherton	Gus Kerndt
Greg McCarty	Gwenne Hayes
Lowell Burkhead	Larry Welch
Charles Winterwood M.D.	Dave and Sue Ecklund

People who want to be added to or removed from this list should contact Doug. To add you to the list, Doug will need to know what training you have had and what personnel equipment you have if any.

The following are the cave rescue emergency phone numbers. These should be supplied to the local police, sheriff's deputy, or fire rescue personnel for them to decide when a call out is required.

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center
NCRC
1-800-851-3051

Iowa County Emergency Management
24 hour number
1-319-642-3151
This is our call out number.

FROM THE EDITOR

The previous issue pointed out the need for enough cover photographs that the editor can do the covers. Asking an associate editor to come up with a cover photo is really too much to ask. Besides putting him in a spot, we have to live with the results when he has nothing suitable or appropriate. We need black and white prints that will fit the format and will reproduce using our cheap as possible printing methods. If it works on a Xerox, it will work on a cover. Silhouettes such as the one on this issue work well. See what you have or take a few with the cover in mind or get some prints made from slides. Put on the back, where, when, who, etc. and the name of the photographer and send them to the editor. Those not used will be in the grotto library. The INTERCOM can be no better than the material sent in.

We also need trip reports. You can no longer say that they don't get used or printed. I know that there are trips going that aren't being written up. Go ahead, bury me in material to where I will have to edit it to make room or if that isn't your bag, volunteer to type an issue of the INTERCOM. Keep in mind that there is no thanks, only criticism. The following are the instructions currently being used by associate editors to type the INTERCOM.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TYPING THE INTERCOM

1. Locate a typewriter or word processor with elite type or 12 letters per inch instead of the more common 10 letters per inch. With the lines also closer together, the savings is about 30 percent in space and printing costs.
2. Refer to INTERCOM Vol 24 No 1 and this issue as the most correct examples.
3. Determine the VOLUME number for the issue to be typed. 1988 is 24 or XXIV, 1989 is 25 or XXV, 1990 is 26 or XXVI, 1991 is 27 or XXVII etc.
4. Determine the ISSUE No. Jan Feb is No 1, Mar April is No 2, May June is No 3, July Aug is No 4, Sept Oct is No 5, and Nov Dec is No 6. NOTE! There are only six issues during a spasm.
5. Page numbers. The cover, front and rear aren't numbered. All other pages are numbered with the issue number - page number. Issue No 4, page 17 is 4-17. That is so every page in a yearly volume will have a different number so the volume can have an index in the rear that references to page numbers. Issues may also be typed out of order if an associate editor gets in trouble.
6. The INTERCOM is printed on both sides of each page but the printing master is only typed on one side. The odd numbered pages will have 1¼ inch margins on the left edge and ½ inch margins on the right. These will be the fronts of the printed page. The even numbered pages will have the ½ inch margins on the left and the 1¼ inch margins on the right and these will be the rear sides.
7. Notice the headings at the top of the pages; Vol and issue No on fronts and INTERCOM on rears at the wide margin side. When the issue is opened, it says INTERCOM Vol XXIV No 1 across the binding but more important, each page is identified as to the name of the publication and the issue number it belongs in.
8. The cover is the responsibility of the senior editor and not the associate editor/typist. The rear of the cover (margin on the right) is the first page to be typed. There are very few changes that need to be made from the one in this issue. No page number.
9. The next page, the CONTENTS page, should be left until last to type. Page X-1.
10. Page X-2 is also a rear with a right margin. It should start with the meeting minutes for the first month of the issue. This is where the editing starts. Arrange the minutes in block form which wastes the least amount of space and put into a readable form. Change any note form to sentences and get rid of abbreviations. Correct grammar and spelling. Change sentence structure when meaning is unclear and readability doesn't flow.
11. The length of meeting minutes often needs to be edited. It is difficult to

fill in the spaces in skimpy minutes if you weren't at the meeting, but long winded minutes can be chopped by deleting the parts that are of no lasting interest.

12. After minutes, comes articles and trip reports. They are treated the same except trip reports are done in chronological order. They should have a title which is centered above the report and used in the table of contents. The next line is the name of the cave, county and state. The next line is the date and the name of the author. The next line is the list of participants starting with the name of the trip leader and taking as many lines as needed to finish the list. Space is money; no empty half pages.
13. Articles and reports should be separated by five to seven lines when not on separate pages. There may be a creative separator typed in this space which helps show the division especially when there is no title.
14. Indent paragraphs five spaces. Double spacing is permitted between paragraphs but isn't recommended when large type is used. Double space after periods and other sentence enders and single space after other punctuation marks.
15. Correct all misspelled words. Be sure that cave names are spelled correctly because this publication is used for reference. If there is any doubt, find out. Check the names of people when the spelling is questionable. People don't like to see their names misspelled on a published work. Other spelling is less important but I suggest three readings to find the typos. If you can't spell or type, give it back to the editor before you start.
16. The contents page should be done on a sheet with the grotto logo at the top. It should have been supplied with the packet. This page should contain the grotto mailing address, and the names of the officers during the months covered. The format of the contents page of this issue goes back to the very early issues of the INTERCOM and should be retained if possible. The contents may be single, double, or 1½ spaced as required to fit properly. When there is no title, use the cave name.
17. If there are any questions, ask the editor before you screw it up.
18. Material for the INTERCOM is due to be in the hands of the editor by two weeks after the end of the month. It is then read, and edited and sent to the associate editor to be typed. The typed issue is due from the associate editor by the following grotto meeting which is usually one and a half weeks.

We need someone to do the November December issue who has a computer and is willing to do an index for VOLUME 24. We have one offer from someone who doesn't have Volume 24.

