

December 1988

## Intercom, Volume 24, No. 6, November-December 1988

Lowell Burkhead

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Published Semi-spasmodically By

THE IOWA GROTTO

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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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. Send articles and trip reports to be published in the INTERCOM to:

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The Iowa Grotto meets at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in room 226 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.

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

Iowa County Emergency Management  
24 hour number  
1-319-642-3151

This number calls out Iowa Grotto rescue personnel.

Cover: This universal cover was first published on INTERCOM Volume 3, 1968. It has since been affixed to several yet to be printed back issues. The photograph planned to go on this issue didn't show up by deadline and all other photos were already used inside this issue. There is a grotto by-law that doesn't allow an issue to be late waiting for a cover.



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

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

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## IOWA GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting November 23, 1988

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Bounk at 7:39 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected. No treasurer's report was given. CORRECTION TO OCTOBER MINUTES: The tourist trip led by Mike Bounk was a group from the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History rather than a geology department trip as stated. TRIP REPORTS: Larry Welch reported on the completion of the mainstream survey in Coldwater Cave and adventures in the Sinus Passage after the survey work was finished. Mike Bounk reported on a trip to the Spong Siphon with Doug Schmuecker, where Doug checked a piton placed previously within the low airspace region. A discussion was undertaken on the best way to handle somewhat unruly and underequipped tour groups in the wake of a troublesome visit to Coldwater by a group of Luther students. Larry Welch reported on a trip to Flowstone Pot in Winneshiek County. FUTURE TRIPS: After the subject of a winter trip was mentioned, a brief discourse followed and it was determined that we were short trip leaders for such a venture. Some discussion followed about the extremely low water levels in Coldwater Cave and low-airspace leads that need to be examined. OLD BUSINESS: More back issues of the INTERCOM have been typed by Lowell Burkhead. An attempt will be made to distribute them if we have the funds. An acceptable format for INTERCOM cover photos was considered and a cover of a future INTERCOM approved. The grotto will sell some duplicate journals from the library to make room for more important material. The December meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of the month due to the holidays. Lowell suggested sending the library copy of the HOTLINE by mail since it isn't always showing up. NEW BUSINESS: Programs for future meetings were discussed. Some videotapes of caving programs can be obtained if we can find equipment to play them. The grotto library has two new filing cabinets, one obtained through barter and the other donated by Lowell. An improved cave rescue network has been put together, and call-out lists are on file with the Iowa County Emergency Management Center who would be contacted by the NCRC and the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. The meeting was adjourned.

Regular Meeting December 21, 1988

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Bounk at 7:45 p.m. with seven members present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read. The treasurer's report listed \$115.35 in the club treasury. TRIP REPORTS: Doug Schmuecker gave a brief presentation on the status of the Iowa Cave Rescue Call-Out Program. Doug suggested that those members wishing to be added or deleted from the call-out list should contact him or any grotto officer. Doug also recommended that people on the list should organize their caving gear as well as possible to insure a rapid response. The new NSS Cave Rescue Manual was also recommended as a good reference source. Doug described the recent NCRC Cave Rescue Seminar that was held in Missouri. A mock rescue featured the evacuation of victims through tight spots. Doug suggested that we consider organizing such a program (perhaps at Mystery Cave) either with the NCRC or just by ourselves. Jay Wells and Doug Schmuecker made a sightseeing tour of the Piggie Passage in Coldwater Cave while Mike Nelson, Dave Ecklund, and Larry Welch traveled through the Spong and Tuna Sea siphons. Mike made a short dive into the Pyramid Passage which was muddy but appeared to go. Larry Welch also reported that two colorless crayfish were seen in this area. Mike Bounk, Mike Nelson, and Larry Welch made a trip to Baade Pit, Clayton County. The constriction at the bottom of the pit was examined and it may require some rock removal to allow entry. Scott Dankof reported on a post-Thanksgiving cave trip to Missouri. Scott, Larry Welch, Mike Lace, Steve Thompson and friend visited Collin's Cave (Howe Co.); Scott, Steve and Mike visited



Bunker Hill Cave and Onyx Cave (Shannon Co.); while Mike and Scott visited Bear Cave (Shannon Co.) and ridgewalked the surrounding area. FUTURE TRIPS: There will be a bat count at Mystery Cave on February 4th while a trip to Grappling Falls is tentatively planned for the January Coldwater Saturday. NEW BUSINESS: Doug Schmuecker was named the Iowa Grotto Safety Officer. A collection of past Iowa Grotto meeting minutes was recently transferred from Tom Hruska to Lowell Burkhead for work on back issues. Lowell also relayed Gary Soule's report on new Iowa Grotto patches. The production cost would run about \$2:00 per patch. The present lack of funds for patches was discussed. Lowell also reported that the Grotto now has an adequate number of envelopes to mail out the INTERCOM. Mike Bounk mentioned a recent article that indicated that fabric softener may not damage ropes after all. Larry Welch and Scott Dankof are preparing six INTERCOM cover photos for the 1989 series. Jay Wells recently joined the grotto. Mike Lace suggested that the grotto contact the University "Touch the Earth" program, which occasionally sponsors a beginner's cave trip, to offer a grotto leader. OLD BUSINESS: Mike Bounk passed on the Iowa Grotto banner to the Chairman-elect who will take office as of January 1st. Thanks for the years of service as Chairman, Mike! The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

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#### HIGH PLAINS CAVER

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa  
September 17, 1988  
Larry Welch, Richard Ames and Mike Lace

by Larry Welch

We were hoping to continue the mainstream resurvey, which had been extended to near the Fountain Formation. The water was very low as a result of the ongoing drought, so pothole country was pretty easy. The air seemed very fresh to me despite being high CO<sub>2</sub> season. We took a few pictures early on, then ditched the camera in pothole country. Richard had a much improved wetsuit over his last Coldwater trip, but still had some equipment troubles. For one, he had oversized coveralls, which caused him to look like the Michelin Man whenever he emerged from deep water. Secondly, he forgot to duct-tape his boots, and they kept filling with water. The boot emptying procedure was similar to a dog watering a fire-plug, and has been photographically recorded for posterity.

By the time we reached Guardian Fangs, Mike wasn't feeling well. I'm sure his memories of surveying through "the swim" from last month helped him decide to continue, but by the time we got to the Brother's Grimm, he had decided to head back. Richard looked in pretty good condition and I felt O.K., so we gave Mike the survey gear and continued while he headed back toward the shaft. Since Mike was a veteran Coldwater Caver, I wasn't too worried about him going out on his own.

Meanwhile, Richard and I decided to do some sightseeing. The downstream breakdown area proved to be solid fare for touring and it proved to be much less of a hassle when touring it at low speed. Richard was a scuba diver, so the swim was not a big deal. We stuck our heads into the Sinus Passage and decided to look around a bit. There really isn't a good way to get to this passage -- you have to swim to the entrance. The first 100 feet of the actual passage was really quite pretty, walking to stooping, well decorated with stalactites and rimstone pools. However, the nice part of the passage ends at a little alcove, and a small lead snakes onward. The bedrock crawl was somewhat reminiscent of Sand Canyon, so we headed back to the mainstream.



Richard was doing pretty well, and I was hoping to get him out to the First Right Hand Side Passage since he was so close. The severe drought had dropped water levels, most significantly of the side passages. I was hoping to have a look at the sump at the end of FRHS passage that Steve Barnett and Larry Fattig had dived to reach the monster dome with the "subway-sized lead". Besides, I hadn't been very far into the passage and was interested in seeing what it looked like.

We headed downstream from Sinus, stopping to check a couple of leads on the west wall that went up mud banks to little domes. If someone wanted to trowel at mud-filled lead, this area would look like paradise.

When we reached FRHSP, Richard still had some zip left, so we decided to head for the sump. We seated ourselves on some dams just inside the passage, and put on our hoods and had some food. Dave Ecklund had told us it was a chilly passage, so we put the hoods on early. After we restarted, the passage quickly shrunk to crawlway. I pointed out to Richard how you could tell that the passage would on occasion flood to the ceiling. His reply was, "Then what the hell are we doing here?" Oops, mistake number one. I reassured him that even if it did rain that the dry ground would soak up the rain. Besides, it wasn't going to rain. Nevertheless, he was less keen on this passage than the mainstream.

He was a good sport and continued, although I could tell he wasn't enjoying it as much. As expected, the passage got smaller and smaller, and the airspace got less and less. It was actually kind of a treat, because you could float along and pull yourself with your arms. There weren't too many sand bars, so I can see how a caver could get chilled.

After a bit of this, there was a breakdown area ahead. I don't really enjoy crawling through breakdown, but I knew I'd better keep my mouth shut about it. So I slithered sideways through some rock, and kept going, with Richard following. He appeared to be tiring and was breathing heavily, but I suspect this was better than being chilly.

We continued for a while, with the passage shrinking, until we came to another breakdown area. This one featured a hanging rock about the size of a cannonball that would have to be crawled under. I was somewhat dubious of its stability, so I crawled up to it and gave it a tap. To my dismay, it moved. Richard was not impressed. As I looked at it more, it would pivot a couple of inches, but it appeared pretty well supported such that it wouldn't fall. If a person flattened himself against the floor and slithered underneath it, there was room to pass without touching the cannonball. On the far side was a roomy ceiling crevice with a broad rimstone dam. With a little coaxing, Richard made it through as well. I could tell by the look on his face that it was the end of the line for Richard. We had been looking for the 152 foot high dome on the right as we entered, knowing the sump wasn't far past it. We hadn't seen the dome, and didn't really know exactly where we were.

Richard made himself comfortable in the crevice, and I decided to look on ahead for a bit. Richard pointed out (in jest, I think) that I shouldn't get in trouble because he had no intention of coming back to save me. I knew that I shouldn't leave him by himself for too long anyway. At the end of the crevice, it was back in the water again, and things got downright wet in a hurry. When it got down to eardipping height, I greatly doubted that we hadn't reached the 152 foot dome, because I knew the passage was surveyed approximately 150 feet past the dome. Surveying would be miserable in this stuff. After a short



stretch of this, the cave opened to a ceiling pocket. It was here that the survey actually ended, but I don't remember seeing a chip.

Airspace got lower on the far side, so I rolled my nose upward and nosed along the ceiling. Under normal water level conditions, this passage would have had 1-2 inches of airspace but it was more like 4-5 inches at the time. The water was 2.5 to 3 feet deep, and I decided to keep my feet on the floor instead of doing the Spong back float, which makes me less comfortable. This low stuff continued for a short time, before I could detect a ceiling pocket ahead. It was nice to enter the crevice, which ran at a right angle to the passage, and relax for a bit. I figured there was no way that this had been surveyed, so we must have passed the 152 foot dome. After catching my breath, it was time to see what was ahead. The crevice extended twenty feet or so to where water was entering, and things looked pretty grim. Airspace was 1-2 inches in the arched center of the passage, nil on the sides. I took a close look and could see at least 20 feet of airspace until the passage doglegged left out of sight.

This had to be the sump under normal weather conditions, yet it was definitely open. There was certainly some instincts luring me on to see if passage could be forced to Barnett's legendary dome, but my gut feeling was to turn back. Richard had been out of earshot for some time and was no doubt getting chilly. Besides, if I were to get in trouble, there was no one there to assist. I would have felt much more comfortable following Mike Nelson than having to lead any kind of Spong-like stuff.

Back at Richard's room he was resting rather comfortably, so we packed our bags and slid under that loose rock one final time. I told him to look for the 152 foot dome on the way out, and sure enough we found it. It had been the spot where we had slid through breakdown, and I hadn't taken the time to look around.

The dome wasn't dripping nearly as much as I expected. It was pretty narrow and we couldn't see much beyond a constriction 35 feet up. I chimneyed up a few feet without much trouble, but had no intentions of getting very high. Richard suggested that only a fool would climb the dome unroped and wearing a wetsuit. It was out to the mainstream from here, and it was time to head back.

We stopped at the mudbank in front of Sue's First Right Hand Side Passage for Richard to adjust his pack, I decided to take a look at the lead. It was a narrow, winding canyon that quickly reduced one to slithering on your side. After about 75 feet, I could see a flowstone constriction blocking the passage. A small side lead went off to the right that probably would require troweling. This appeared to be where Sue had stopped during her previous exploration. The passage looked a little bigger on the far side of the constriction, and there was a window that might be big enough, with virgin passage beyond.

I gave it a try, using Two Days Digging techniques to get my shoulders through, and the rest was no problem. Once I got there the passage didn't look roomy at all. I slithered forward for a couple of body lengths, where the passage turned and encountered another flowstone obstruction. This one was soaked in with mud, and would be a major trowel. Oh well, now to extricate myself. It was too small to turn around, so I would have to back through the obstruction. Due to the angle, this proved difficult as I was backing uphill. I had to splay my legs and pull on toeholds to get my upper body through. Once I caught my breath, I backed up until I could turn around, then zoomed out of there.

Richard was getting cold, so I was obliged to start back without much of a rest, but we were going to head back at a slow pace, so it didn't matter much.



It was a slow trip back, but we had seen a lot of cave, and Richard had done very well. Certainly more excitement than a weekend in Wahpeton, North Dakota where he's from, in the high plains. (Water level, platform 7.4", shed 6" very suspect reading)

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#### MAINSTREAM RESURVEY IV

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

October 15, 1988

by Larry Welch

Larry Welch, Bill Nelson, Mike Nelson, and Mike Lace

It was all planned: this was the month that we would purge ourselves of this ugly little project of resurveying the mainstream by finishing the mother off. The survey was hanging at about the Fountain Formation, and we were going to blast all the way to the Equipment Cache, followed by serious babysitting of the data so it isn't lost again.

We had some lineup changes beforehand, with Sue Ecklund resigning due to motherhood and its inherent lack of sleep. Bill Nelson volunteered to fill in for Sue, I'm sure partially because he and his brother wanted to run me into the dirt one more time. (And hopefully finish the mother off. Ed.)

We got into the cave at the usual time, and made swift progress with the water still low. Bill found a crayfish stranded in a pool in Pothole Country; it seemed a bit startled by our lights. Mike Lace had to drop out at Guardian Fangs, due to sleep deprivation brought on by graduate school. I begged him not to leave me with those two Nelson fiends, but to no avail. We still had enough to survey, so we transferred gear and pressed on.

We made good time to our starting point, and broke out the survey gear. Mike was lead tape, I was compass, and Bill ran the book. The numerous deep pools of water always made surveying a challenge. I traversed several pools with the compass under my helmet, and Bill would swim along one-handed with the book held up with the other arm. We set a chip at the "mud covered ledge" lead, the only chip before Beaver Boneyard. Next came Critter Pass, Sand Canyon, and the Sinus Passage. We were unable to locate a chip at Sinus, so we set a new one. It could be tied in to a chip further up the passage with 2-3 shots.

Bill and Mike were getting chilled by this time. Mike had an extra wetsuit jacket that they kept swapping back and forth, and whoever didn't have it on was chilly. We continued tying into Sue's First Right Hand Side Passage, and setting a chip at some dome leads before reaching First Right Hand Side Passage. The chip here also could not be located, so Mike tied a chip on a large stalactite at the mouth of the passage.

We had some water and munchies here, then voted on the course of action. We could not survey more unless we did something to warm up. The overriding sentiment was to head out for pizza. We made excellent time on the way out, taking two hours and five minutes to reach the shaft despite my need to stop and breath occasionally.

Our survey total was about 3000 feet, but we still have one more trip left to complete our mission. Nevertheless, we had accomplished an incredible amount during our 8 hours in the cave.



## NCRC RESCUE ORIENTATION WEEKEND

Mark Twain Cave, Marion County, Missouri

November 12&13, 1988

by Mike Nelson

Doug Schmuecker, Mike Nelson and Delores Nelson

This peek at the three distinct one week courses NCRC offers, was held in the Mark Twain Cave and Campground facilities, in Hanibal, Mo. About 25 of us, almost entirely cavers, were exposed, from near dawn 'til after dusk, to a mind-boggling series of lectures, equipment demonstrations and "what if?" scenarios. These were normally followed by litter practices through a "cave" obstacle course on the surface. The cold, wet and dark of the late afternoon had the teachers concerned, even though I had pointed out that this was the cavers natural habitat, and that cavers aren't easily inconvenienced. Still they moved the operations into Cameron Cave, and no one was terribly P.O.ed. It was late by the time we had finished two separate exercises. We only had a couple of hours to go grab a bite and get back before they locked up the gates at 10:00 p.m. There were people out banging on windows and shaking tents by 5:00 a.m.

By shortly after 6:00 a.m., we were engaged in a mock rescue of two individuals from a location inside of Cameron Cave. Nothing in particular went smoothly or went as even common sense might dictate. This I believe is exactly what the course intended to get across. One could not help but come away with the feeling "You don't know what you don't know about cave rescue".

I could have gone into great detail in this report to touch briefly on the many complex aspects involved in a rescue program, but I hope that last sentence in that last paragraph summed it up. If you cave seriously, or are seriously involved in any manner with caving, you owe it to yourself and those you cave with to learn how to look out for yourselves and those less experienced who venture into the underground. If nothing else, being aware of how extremely difficult it would probably be to be gotten out of the average cave would give one pause to consider the even marginally stupid things one might be tempted to try on occasion.

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## MAINSTREAM RESURVEY: THE FINAL CHAPTER

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

November 19, 1988

by Larry Welch

Larry Welch, Mike Nelson and Dave Ecklund

It had been a weight on our shoulders all summer, but we were finally going to head downstream and finish the resurvey of the mainstream. Although there had been some recent precipitation and there was a threat of more, the water level remained low at around 7.4 inches at the platform.

We were getting to the point where we could stroll mindlessly all the way downstream, so we set about doing it at about noon. I slowed up the procession a bit by pulling out my camera and shooting some pictures, but Dave and Mike were natural hams and didn't seem to mind at all being recorded for posterity in their wetsuit garb.

Our only odd observation on the way to begin the survey was the unusually high amount of foam seen in the breakdown regions. One of the larger dams in



rimstone country had 10-12 feet of foam backed up behind it, and I unsheathed my camera to record this event. We had been through the month before and there hadn't been a bit of foam.

Everyone was in good shape when we reached our destination at the mouth of the First Right Hand Side Passage. We unloaded the survey gear and I got the dubious honor of keeping book, while Mike was lead tape, and Dave ran the compass. After the first shot they were all running about 100 feet, so we really clipped along. Whereas the survey was pretty easy, Dave was reading the compass much faster than I had on the previous trip, so we were moving fast enough to keep warm. My light was giving me problems at this point, but it was bright enough to record data. Dave pointed out several places where pieces of plastic were adhered to small stalactites, indicating that the passage had flooded in recent times. Being the cave restoration man in the crew, Dave stopped and removed the plastic.

Before we knew it we were at the Equipment Cache, where I tallied the book and Dave packed the rest of the gear. Mike was curious about the siphon that lay ahead, and vanished under the ledge to venture downstream. I took the time to work on my poorly functioning lamp, which worked better after the tune-up. Mike reappeared and said he had gone a couple hundred feet or so and could have gone further if he had wanted to don his hood.

Everyone was still in good shape, so it made sense to examine another lead while we were so far downstream. Dave had a particular interest in the Sinus Passage, so we headed there. We knew the passage had been surveyed a short distance through some nasty crawlway by a Minnesota group. Pete DeVries had reported that it became an easy crawl later on and they turned around in hands-and-knees crawlway. It was rumored that only Steve Barnett had been to the end of the passage, which terminated in a dome. I was hoping this was not going to turn into another Sand Canyon.

The first part of the passage is an easy stoopwalk, but from there it is a nasty bedrock crawl. It was very difficult going until the end of the survey, at which point the passage became somewhat larger. There was a chest compressor just before the end of the survey, and it didn't help that I was carrying my wet-suit hood under the chest of my wetsuit. We had ditched our packs, which made the going a lot easier. At the end of the survey I noticed that I had lost my backup light source, which left me with just my headlamp. I tried to stay close to Dave or Mike from this point on in case my headlamp met disaster. We continued onward, passing a number of difficult rimstone pools. The geometry was such that you had to squeeze between the ceiling and the dam, then splash headfirst into the pool on the far side which was a couple of feet deep.

The passage was, however, getting larger. It eventually reached comfortable hands-and-knees height, but due to its shape it was still irritating. The bottom was snaggy bedrock, and it was usually too tight there to crawl properly. I was snagging more than Dave and Mike because they didn't have coveralls on, but at least I didn't have to worry about gouging my wetsuit. Dave was really suffering because he didn't have any kneepads, so he decided to stop and head back. Mike and I continued with Mike in the lead. The rimstones were fewer and far between in the back of the passage, so we made much better time.

My arms were getting sore after a while so we stopped to rest. The passage was comfortable to rest in, but never comfortable when you wanted to crawl through it. We had been hearing Dave humming and water sloshing behind us, so assumed that he had changed his mind and was following us. After a spell, we decided that Dave really wasn't there, but the humming was a little hard to explain.



Dave later related that he had distinctly heard someone humming behind him, so had assumed that Mike and I were following him out. Once we decided that Dave wasn't behind, we decided to continue until we found the source of the water noise that we heard ahead. We crawled a bit further and as expected found a small rimstone dam. After another rest we decided to go another 10 body lengths. After about 15 body lengths, we went around a sharp turn, and Mike reported that the passage ended. He was in a small room that had an infeeder on the left that was too small to enter. Ahead of him was a chamber with some breakdown, but there was a bedrock squeeze in front of the chamber between the ceiling and a rimstone dam.

Mike didn't think he would fit, so gave me a chance to try the squeeze. It was tight, but I got my head through to see that the chamber was a 20 foot high dome, which was possibly Barnett's Dome. I tried to squeeze through, but of course still had my wetsuit hood in the way. I was tired, so didn't try removing the hood and pushing the squeeze. It was probably big enough, but a few taps with a hammer would certainly provide clearance. The water was entering the dome from a joint that was filled with breakdown, but it was passable for as far as I could see which wasn't very far. Knowing the capabilities of Steve Barnett, I was certain that he would have fit through the squeeze. So if the passage goes past the dome, it must terminate in another dome. Whatever the case, we were not going to solve it this day, so headed out and left further pushing until more of the passage was surveyed. It was pretty hard to estimate the distance, but Mike and I guessed that it was 800 feet from the main passage to the dome. Only the actual survey data will tell. After contorting a bit to turn around, we headed on our merry way out of the passage. Being in considerably poorer shape than Mike, I slowed him down a bit with my frequent requests for rest stops. Still, it was a lot of work on the arms, and I was getting pretty sore by the time we reached the survey chip. Naturally the last little bit was a pain, but it sure felt good to reach the mainstream again.

There was nothing left to do at this point but to drag ourselves and the survey book out of the cave. Dave and Mike were nice and let me stop and rest on the way out, but we still made good time. Pizza in Harmony put the cap on the day's activities.

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#### RETURN TO FLOWSTONE POT

Flowstone Pot, Winneshiek County, Iowa  
November 20, 1988  
Mike Lace, Larry Welch, Mike Nelson, Beth Welch

by Mike Lace

We contacted cave owner Lester Teslow about an open pit lead in Winneshiek County that he had told us of earlier. Lester was extremely helpful, as usual, by contacting the owner of the open pit and arranging the visit for the four of us. The owners of the pit were more than happy to lead us to the site and were interested enough to watch us descend.

The large pit entrance was on the side of a ridge and opened into a beautiful 47 foot daylight pit with an extensive breakdown pile on the floor. The lip of the pit was cleaned of loose rock and the rope rigged to a nearby tree and I was elected to make the first drop.



As I worked my way below the lip, it soon became clear that the walls of the pit were unstable with sheets of rock and decayed flowstone peeling away as I slowly rappelled. The pit looked even worse from the bottom and I made sure I was well out of harm's way as Nelson descended.

We took a few pictures as we poked around the base of the pit. No leads were found; if there are any, they're buried under a deep layer of rubble. The pit actually looks like a dome that worked its way to the surface, forming the daylight drop. Besides the old dry flowstone on the one wall, a fine column shaped sheet of active flowstone ran from the base of the pit to the top on the wall opposite our descent.

We finally decided that the less time spent in this worrisome pit, the better, so we ascended to give Larry a chance to drop it and take a first hand look. At the time, we thought the pit might be virgin so we named it "Elwood's Drop" after the owner but we later discovered that Greg McCarty had probably visited this cave some time ago and named it "Flowstone Pot".

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#### CAVING OF THE GREATEST MAGNITUDE

Devil's Icebox, Collins Cave, Rock Bridge State Park, Howell County, Missouri  
November 26, 1988 by Scott Dankof  
Scott Dankof, Mike Lace, Larry Welch, Steve Thompson and Clint---

Saturday, Mike Lace and I started the long drive to West Plains, Mo., in the extreme south central section of the state. Larry Welch was leaving from his new home in Illinois, so we were going to meet him on the way down. The day started out a little gloomy with rain and fog. At noon we took a food break, then made a stop at Rock Bridge State Park to see the Devil's Icebox. The Icebox has over six miles of passage with much of it being waterfilled. A canoe is necessary for the first part of the cave. Mike and I checked out the sinkhole entrance and looked at the downstream resurgence. It would be worth coming back to take a trip into it.

We got back on the road and met Larry in Edgar Springs. About that time we ran into some intense thunderstorms. Finally, we arrived in West Plains, unpacked our gear at my friend Steve Thompson's house, and then decided we still had time to see a cave before it got too late. The rain had quit, so after a short drive we arrived at Collins Cave. Larry, Mike, Steve, Clint and I hiked down the slope to the entrance. We ducked our heads and entered the five foot high by ten foot wide entrance. The passage went down in a series of climbable drops. After about 30 feet we reached a ledge overlooking a circular room. There was a 10 foot drop then another 7 foot drop to the floor of the room. Someone had gone to the trouble to haul an aluminum ladder into the cave to get down the drops. The ladder actually made the climb more unsafe, but we all made it to the bottom. Larry checked out a crawlway with water coming out of it, while Mike and I checked out the drain on the far wall. The drain turned into a small gravel bottomed passage that would require digging. Larry emerged from his lead quite muddy. He's such a animal. He told us the passage went to a few small chambers, and kept going as a water crawl. I took some pictures as we all climbed back up the ladder. Mike, Steve, and Clint explored some passages in the upper level. Larry and I went back to the truck to wait for them.



Soon they arrived and we all went back to Steve's house for the evening festivities. Burnt popcorn, liquid refreshment, Jesse "The Body" Ventura on TV, and some really strange people that just happened to drop in were some of the highlights. Not the best influence on wholesome cavers such as we.

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"JUST 100 FEET TO GO..."

Bunker Hill Cave, Shannon County, Missouri

November 27, 1988

by Mike Lace

Scott Dankof, Mike Lace, Steve Tompson, Tracey \_\_?\_\_, Larry Welch

We left West Plains, Mo. late Sunday morning, intending to tour Bunker Hill Cave which lies in the scenic Jack's Fork Valley. Scott had visited this cave, as well as many others in the region, before he left the Ozarks for the scenic(?) Des Moines area. I was particularly intrigued by Scott's description of fording the river to reach the ravine that held the cave entrance. When we reached the river, it was obvious that recent rains had discouraged any ideas we had of crossing either by foot or by two-man raft (which Scott had thrown into the back of the pickup, "just in case".)

It was decided that we might find an access road on the other side of the river, so, armed with topo maps, we put the vehicles in four wheel drive and worked our way down to the river's edge to within a half mile of the cave. The leafless trees made it easy to spot numerous openings in the bluffs along the river. Larry accompanied us part of the way to the cave but opted to return to the cars due to what he later discovered was a rampant viral infection of the non-controversial variety. The four of us continued up the ravine and soon found ourselves standing below a gaping entrance in the side of the ridge.

After snapping a few photos in and around the entrance, we began following the small stream through a dry crawl to the edge of a large pool with a small waterfall feeding it. Scott said that the crawl ahead of us was reasonably short, interesting, and mostly dry; well, he was partly right - it was interesting but mostly wet and longer than all four of us anticipated. Being from Iowa cave country, the wallowing in the wet crawlway wasn't a terrible ordeal for Scott and I but Steve and Tracey were less than enthused. Unlike any other cave in the area, Bunker Hill has a section with heavy deposits of sand that leave a caver covered with a gritty coat both over and under the cave clothes. The crawl seemed to drag on as Scott insisted that the "Big Room" we were crawling to was "just another hundred feet ahead".

We did eventually reach a large passage with a huge breakdown obstruction. After a bit of poking around, we found an upper crawl that led right into a light-swallowing void which measured 300 feet long, 40-50 feet high, and 80 feet wide. Truck-sized breakdown blocks were stacked on each side as well as large mud and clay slopes that were tinted with a deep red color characteristic of the area. Steve and I followed the small stream that meandered along the floor to its source, a four foot high sheet of water that escaped from a small horizontal crack. The room, as well as the rest of the cave was not heavily decorated but I thought it was interesting to see the intricately sculpted mud that lined this impressive section. There were many bats, of course, some of which were much larger than the pipistrelles or small browns seen that day. There was an upper walking passage that supposedly continued but it was getting late so we decided to return to the sandy crawlway and exit the cave after a few big room photos.



We exited Bunker Hill Cave just as the sun was setting and our wet cave clothes began to tell us that a chill was in the air. We rejoined Larry at the vehicles, packed it all up, and headed back to town for a well-earned pizza. This trip, as well as the others taken on this holiday, convinced me that a return trip to this region is definitely high on my list.

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#### BEAR CAVE

Bear Cave, Texas County, Missouri  
November 28, 1988  
Scott Dankof and Mike Lace

by Scott Dankof

Steve had to work Monday, so Mike and I drove up to the Jacks Fork River north of Mountain View, Mo. We parked at the end of a jeep trail near the river. It was just a short hike to the cave. The entrance is in a very picturesque conyon just off the river, with springs and small caves everywhere. We ducked into the four foot high by eight foot wide entrance and walked down into the first room which measured about ten feet high and 25 feet wide. On the far wall a passage with a small stream flowing out of it led off into the darkness. Mike and I proceeded into this passage tiptoeing across rocks, trying to keep our feet dry. We went through probably another 200 to 300 feet of walking height passage, past a number of stalactites and flowstone columns. Soon we came to the end. Mike checked out the last room, and then we exited taking pictures as we went.

There is supposed to be another good sized cave on the opposite ridge, but after an hour hike, we hadn't found it. We did find a 60 foot crevice cave with a nice formation at the end of it. Mike scaled a ledge braving a fall into a deep pool of water to find six feet of low wet crawlway.

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#### ONYX CAVE

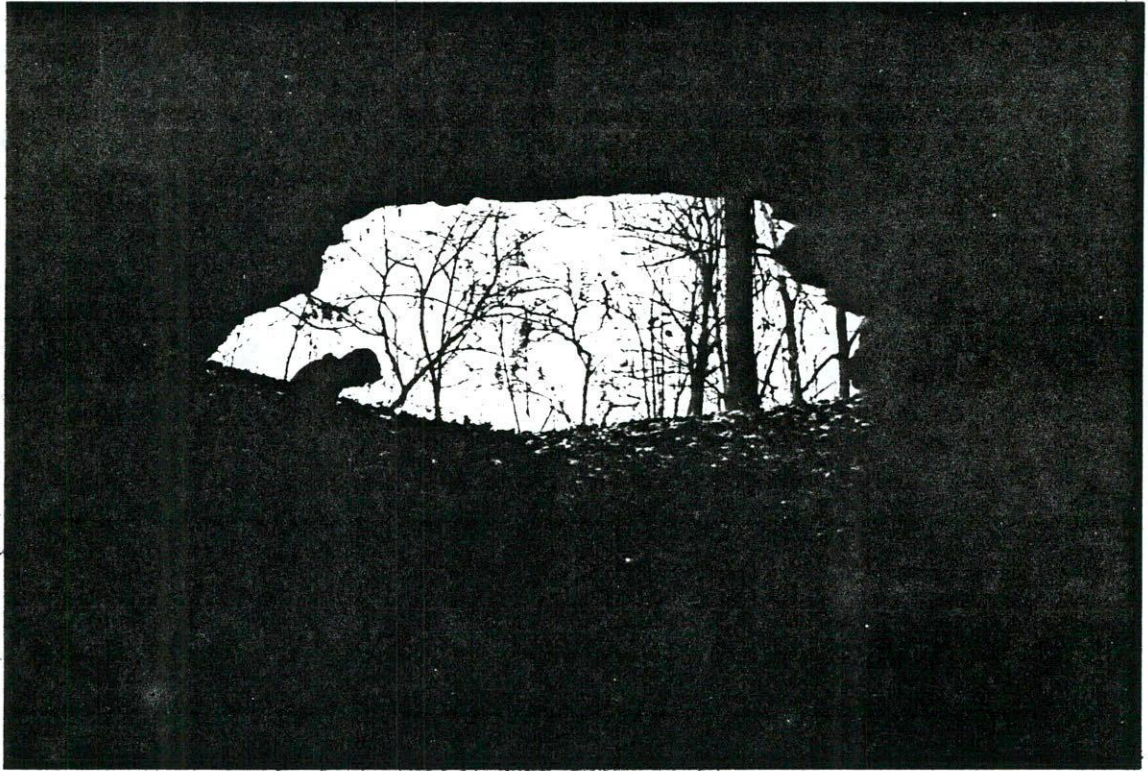
Onyx Cave, Howell County, Missouri  
November 28, 1988  
Scott Dankof, Mike Lace and Steve Thompson

by Scott Dankof

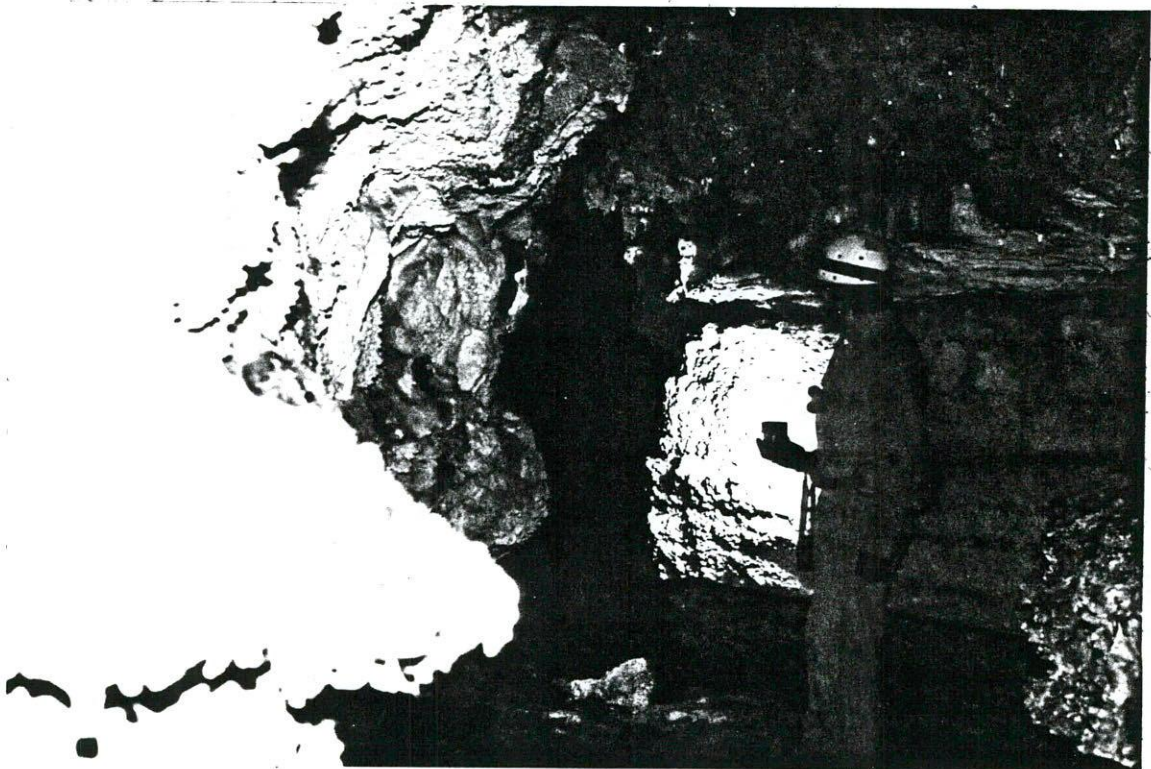
At 6:00 p.m. we headed out of town for some early evening caving. Steve and I had both been to Onyx Cave before, and thought Mike would like to see it. We parked above the cave in the owners yard and climbed down the steep hillside to the 10 foot high by 15 foot wide entrance. Everyone entered the cave and picked their way down a rock-strewn slope into the first room. This room had a ceiling height ranging from 10 to 20 feet high, and walls about 30 feet apart. A large but vandalized column stood guard next to the trail.

Looking around the room we entered a dusty crawlway. After crawling about 30 feet we come to a small chamber and then a large breakdown room. Mike and Steve climbed over the breakdown and took a look at the next room which had a small trickle of water coming out of a hole in the ceiling.





Mike Lace at the entrance of Bear Cave  
Texas County, Missouri  
Photo by Scott Dankof



Mike Lace in Bear Cave  
Texas County, Missouri  
Photo by Scott Dankof



When they come back we ducked under a ledge and followed a passage along the edge of a 15 foot deep pit. After another 30 to 40 feet of crawling and stoop-walking, we come to a small room with a gate built across a small crawlway. This crawlway had a good breeze being sucked into it. I believe the gate had been erected by a local grotto. Someone had tried to kick in the front of the gate by the look of things, but wasn't able to break through. Says a lot for good construction. There was even a saw that we found nearby. Another thing I must comment on was the amount of trash left behind by the people who built the gate. We found wood, steel rods, a five gallon bucket, concrete sacks, and other assorted trash. Come on, it's a 20 minute trip to the entrance. If your going to haul this stuff in, lets at least haul it back out. Nuff said.

We headed back to the entrance room and started into Dog Butt Crawl. This crawl has an interesting story behind it. When I first visited this cave the owner had a dog that followed us into the cave. As we were coming back through this crawl, the dog went first. He must have been claustrophobic because he stopped right in the tightest part and wouldn't go any further. One of my friends was right behind him, and needless to say when he looked up to see what was going on, it wasn't a pretty picture. Hence the name, Dog Butt Crawl.

After going through this we climbed down a series of drops to a lower level stream. There were three passages leaving here with two of them taking in a breeze. Mike's eyes lit up at the sight of this. He said he'd like to check this out with a wetsuit sometime in the future. We exited the cave and headed back to Steve's house. Total time in the cave was about two hours.



Mike Lace's feet in Dog Butt Crawl  
Onyx Cave, Howell County, Missouri  
Photo by Scott Dankof



ACCURSED COMMON SENSE

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa  
December 17, 1988  
Mike Nelson, Dave Ecklund and Larry Welch

by Mike Nelson

We who had been working the extreme upstream end of Coldwater Cave had been waiting patiently for the Iowa winter to come and lock up all the moisture possible, before venturing through the hundreds of feet of marginal airspace passages that led to the sumps that guarded the subject of our endeavours. When that day finally arrived, our crew was split by other obligations and we couldn't put together an adequate survey team to scuba dive through the sumps to survey the 2000 plus feet of big passage waiting there.

It took no little amount of encouragement to convince Larry to join Dave and me to go up through the Spong Siphon and the Tuna Sea to check a dig site and a submerged side passage. We planned a short trip and were expected out at a certain time for pizza.

On close inspection, the dig site didn't merit any attention. As we reached our other objective, the Pyramid Passage near the Scandawhovian Sumps, I was compelled to go on and check the water level at this series of four sumps. Finding them opened, I slid through them and the Three Dive Sump beyond, and was back within five minutes. Larry then tried his composure by slipping through two of the normally sumped portions of the Scandawhovians. We were sorely tempted to go on and work on the other side, but Dave and I didn't want to pressure Larry to go through these very close spots, the type of which he had expressed a loathing of in the past. With unbelievable maturity and common sense, we adhered firmly to our original plan.

I slipped on a single pony tank, tied a belay line onto my foot, and let Dave reel me one body length into the sumped Pyramid Passage. The passage continued its distinct triangular shape as it dropped down  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet and made a gentle curve off to the left. The point of the triangle above the water line dropped, creating an ever narrower line at the surface level, until it reached its lowest level, then began to widen as the passage began to rise. At the end of my line of vision there should have been room to get ones face out of the water, if the configuration to the passage remained consistent. I had seen what I had come to see, and wanted to mull over the prospect before actually diving the sump.

Had we discussed going on and checking the remaining sumps, The End Again and The Nasty, we probably would have, it was agreed in retrospect. We can only hope that we did not pass up an opportunity at the as yet unpushed Nasty Sump

Any sump that I can nose my way through, as opposed to scuba diving it, is enticing. The nature of this particular sump was not as inviting as all those before it to dive.

We have managed to field a crew big enough to take advantage of the exceedingly low water conditions. We intend to exploit the savings in time and energy that not having to tote and use scuba gear will provide. An off weekend trip is in the works, with half of our crew determined to survey from The End Again Sump to the Nasty Sump, then push beyond if possible. The other half will return to Bert Falls and resume the survey there.

## BAADE PIT

Baade Pit, Clayton County, Iowa

December 18, 1988

Mike Nelson, Larry Welch and Michael Bounk

by Michael Bounk

We met at Farmersburg at noon and headed to the pit. There was about one inch of snow on the ground so walking was easy. The temperature was in the twenties and I expected it to rise, at most, to the mid thirties, not high enough to cause melt runoff especially considering how dry the ground was.

We rigged the grotto's 200 foot Bluewater II from a bar over the pit. We then tied our new white kernmantle rope to the Bluewater and then to a tree as a backup. I rapelled down, and some equipment was lowered to me and then Mike and Larry rapelled down. Larry led the way into the crawl and down into the room just before the final crawl. When Mike and I got into the room, Larry tried to get through the tight part of the crawl. He could only get about as far as we did on the previous digging trip when we dug out about five feet of the crawl. He reports that the passage is up to eight inches high and 18 inches wide with a solid rock floor. He did hear a nice echo up ahead. We exited about 5:00 p.m. It goes but we don't fit.



The following is a copy of a booklet from the cave library of grotto member Gary K. Soule, NSS 11198, of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. This booklet was a tourist souvenir at Decorah's Wonder Cave. It is not only history but contains interesting and useful information.



## Places of Interest -- See Them All

**Decorah Cavern.** A wonderful attraction, located  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles northeast of the city. All-weather road. Follow signs or inquire.

**Ice Cave.** Take FIRST road to LEFT after you get to pavement (No. 52) from Decorah Cavern. Don't miss this oddity of nature! See Dunning's Spring—this road.

**City Park.** Drive out Ice Cave road, cross river. Go two blocks beyond junction of No. 52 and No. 9, turning RIGHT and drive out street (Broadway). Don't miss foot-walk along west side.

**Siewers Spring Fish Hatchery.** Leaving City Park drive out Broadway, turn right on No. 9. Take road to RIGHT after crossing large steel bridge. Again take road to RIGHT, across another iron bridge. Follow signs. All-weather road. Return same way. (Five miles out.)

**Museum.** Last building on your right in business section as you go west on Water Street (main thoroughfare, No. 52). Interesting.

**Luther College.** Continue West on No. 52, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. Turn LEFT on paved side street. (Sign here, too.) Beautiful buildings and grounds.

**Pulpit Rock Park.** Return from Luther College. Take street to RIGHT just before you get to river bridge. Drive out street, cross river, follow main road to park. Leave car and go afoot to enjoy it most.

**Twin Springs Trout Hatchery.** Continue. Turn LEFT first road. Then RIGHT. Continue to hatchery.

**Dug Way Drive.** Return, but drive straight ahead. Continue until you strike town. Beautiful drive! Go slow, and ENJOY it!

**Clocks.** Leave from uptown on No. 9, going WEST 8 miles. Inquire at filling station there. Very, very interesting. Don't miss it!

This little pamphlet has been made as interesting as possible, and here's hoping that you have enjoyed it all. Please tell your home weekly about your trip. Better still, write an article yourself and give it to your editor. He will appreciate it greatly! Goodbye, and thank you! Come again!  
CAVEMAN I.

Your friend may enjoy this little booklet—please pass it on.

# The WONDER CAVE\*

## THE DECORAH CAVERN

AND

## ICE CAVE NEWS

INFORMATION

DECORAH, IOWA

SOUVENIR

### Welcome Friends, Visitors and Tourists!

Welcome, twice welcome, to the Switzerland of America! It is a pleasure to have you call on us today, and we trust that you will be more than pleased with the wonders and beauties around about Decorah—caves, bluffs, rocks, ravines, beautiful scenes—and the truly wonderful Decorah Cavern.

Decorah Cavern, which has just been opened to the public, is the most beautiful work of nature found in this section of the country. Visitors have told us that the cavern's Rock of Ages surpasses even formations found in the largest and most famous caves. And this cavern's waterfall is a thing of rare beauty. Its stream is swift, clinging closely to the 30-foot black formation over which it runs only to drop into the twinkling pool below.

A short distance from Decorah Cavern lies the world famous Ice Cave—one of the real oddities of nature, where you will see nature in reverse—winter in summer! Don't miss this!

Elsewhere we have laid out a trip for you to take so as to see the many places of interest in and around Decorah in a most direct route, starting at the Decorah Cavern. Make this trip. You'll enjoy it.

**NOTICE—**Watch your step, and do not touch  
any light wires, stones, or formations!

\* New name by visitors' request. We hoped you'd like the cave, but hardly THAT well! Thank you!



## *A Trip Through Decorah Cavern*

Before we start on our journey through the Decorah Cavern let us first acquaint ourselves with what we shall see. The guide will point them out as we proceed, but this will give us a little on what we can expect. We enter the cavern through a natural arched entrance and come upon a hallway whose sides and ceiling contain a number of small formations which are known as "dead," for the reason that if there is no water on formations they are stagnant, not in the process of forming—a very slow process as it takes 1000 years to form one cubic inch! As each drop of water drops off of a formation it leaves an infinitesimal amount of sediment, and this sediment slowly solidifies to become as hard as rock.

As we descend to the second level we see the Four Elephant Heads with their 3-foot trunks. Passing under a natural arch of rugged stone we look directly upon the Draped Wall with its rich chocolate color. Glancing to the side we become aware of the cream colored "fudge" formation which looks as if it is oozing right out of the rocks. Taking up our march again we come to the Narrows, and passing between massive stones we lift our eyes upward to the very top of the room and there we see the Frozen Falls which descends down to third level, a distance of about 40 or 50 feet.

We reach the real Formation Room on third level. Here the formations are of so great a number that one must "Stop-Look-Go" or one might get an awful biff from a low-hung stalactite. Then the floodlight is switched on and before you appears the Rock of Ages, a superb and magnificent cream colored formation some 15 feet high. We pause at this great work of nature's art, and with bowed heads we leave to enter into an artificial tunnel where we see the remnants of the original hole half filled with water and mud through which my partner wormed his way to be the first human to discover a sparkling stream dashing over a high precipice, a waterfall which presents a most marvelous sight as the water falls into the twinkling pool below.

All this you can see and we are sure that when you have done so you will find that our words have failed to give you the true beauty of Decorah Cavern.

## *Ice Cave*

The Ice Cave, located directly to the north of the city, is an unusually interesting phenomenon. An icy blast blows from the mouth of the cave all summer long. At times the draft becomes so cold as to form ice on the walls. This ice formation is, it seems, dependent on many things—humidity and heat and also upon the severity, or lack of it, of the preceding winter. Many people are of the mind that inasmuch as this cave bears the name Ice Cave there should be ice in the cave whenever they visit it. We wish this were so. But just as there is not always ice over a river all the time during the winter months, due to the weather conditions, so the ice in the cave is likewise affected during the summer. But this rule generally holds for the ice formation—it begins to appear in March, at the time the snow melts, and remains until about the latter part of August. Which does not mean that the walls are heavily coated with ice, nor that the ice will, as some seem to expect, "come out and meet them." The hotter the weather, the colder the draft of air from the cave, although the temperature averages during May to September about 34 to 40 degrees. From September the cave gradually loses its icy air. When the thermometer crawls down to zero and below we find, upon examination of the cave walls, that there are quite a number of frosted holes through which warm air blows. The warmest place on February 1 one year showed a temperature of 42 degrees above, while outside the temperature stood at zero. The thermometer used on this occasion is no longer in our possession. In fact, two more have walked out on us, or something like that, and as we are readily recognized by the dent in our pocketbook, we cannot afford to supply all souvenir hunters with thermometers—nor ice from the cave walls. (Please write your congressman today.)

It is remarkable that the cave should be so cold, situated as it is in a south slope which is baked by the summer sun. According to legend, Indians knew of this natural ice box and preserved meat and food in it during the summer months.



## *The Discovery, Exploration and Development of Decorah Cavern*

Most all visitors are interested in how this Art Treasure of Nature was found, explored and developed. In fact, there have been very few who have not asked us to repeat our story. It may be a little lengthy but the writer will try to make it as interesting as he can.

My friend and I have to eat, of course. And jobs were scarce. We went cave hunting. And what a hunt it was! We peeped into every sinkhole for miles around Decorah just to find all of them either plugged with mud, too small to develop, or not on a good road — a thing of great importance.

Finally, yes finally, just about when our hunting fever was dead, we came across what you now see. It has taken us over a period of one year to put the Decorah Cavern in shipshape, and what a job that was! Notice, if you will, all the dirt and rock outside and when you imagine that it all came out in buckets full you start to realize what efforts were spent to make this newly opened wonder a possibility. But, that's ahead of my story.

On the morning of July 3, 1935, we slid into a hole in the hillside, a hole with a beautiful natural entrance. We could see only a few feet with our flashlights but sure enough the opening lead on and on, and our surprise and imagination and flashlights lead us on and on, too. But the way was cramped and narrow and the stones were rough, sharp and hook-like, so a rip here and a rip there and a bump here and a skinned elbow there was the order of the day. We go on. Another thug on our clothes. A yank. One more rip and bump. But we are free. It's a little wider now, and going down very gently. Then as we flashed our lights around there was a blank wall. But no, no. Pointing the lights downward we saw we were standing on the brim of a deep black hole! No use to try it. A rope — a rope. We get one up town. With a new rip, bump and sore shin we fasten the rope and test it. Down one fellow goes. He strikes bottom but oh, so far down! The other fellow, well he gets down in a fashion. Then flashlights play round and round. Quite a hole. But look! Walls

are covered with formation, and there is a natural arch, and look over here, some beautiful light chocolate colored formation. It is beautiful! Looks like knotted tapestry. Now what is here? Let's see. Only a very narrow passage between two massive rocks. This all? The end! Our enthusiasm drops five points. But up through the passage we climb. Hard to make it, so slippery. Got to step just so or we'll get stuck. But Columbus made it, so we would try. With another twist and squirm we made it. After a couple of "oh"s and "ah"s here's what we saw: The Frozen Falls, the Knotted Pillar and a little waterfall, which just runs (rather drips) after a rainfall. But where do we go from here? Just rocks? We'll see, if at all possible. So carefully we leave this narrow passage-way and even more carefully we cross over a jumble of stones and dirt and go to the lowest corner. Stones here are more clean. Seems as if washed. Here's a little space between them! Lights, lights! They are pointed down. What's this, what's this? We can see bottom ten feet below. One fellow says: "Now you know how Columbus felt!" Other fellow said: "Is that so?" There wasn't much conversation anyhow. We needed a crowbar and more rope. But the thought of getting out was something, a big something, as it was such hard work. But with a grunt here and a puff there and many a slip we got out, left for town and home. Thus another day came to an end.

Morning found us in a better mood, but our clothes, though dry, could about stand alone because of the mud. Wire nails closed the worst rips in shirt and pants, and we set out to conquer again. And conquer we must or bust. Anyway, go hungry. So we took along rope, plenty of clothes, including a pair of kneepads to protect the more or less stone bruised knees suffered from our first expedition into the underworld. Out there now. Dress warmly. All set to conquer. After about 30 minutes we reach our place of attack. The crowbar removes a rock. Rather it falls. *Boom!* It lands somewhere. Just enough room to slide through. A rope is fastened to the biggest rock in the Frozen Falls, and carefully we slide down. We peer around. What a small place! But see — here's a stalactite and a stalagmite! Big ones, too. And there's another and another — and still some more! Is this a fairyland? We pinch ourselves. No, it's real! Oh boy! Another slow step — another step.



### *The Decorah Cavern and Ice Cave News*

A small room. Yes, this must be a fairyland, for, look at all the formations hanging from the ceiling, and over here! See it buddy! Rock of Ages! Fifteen feet high! Draped with a large number of Elephant Ears! Oh—this IS fairyland! We pause and rest at the foot of the Rock of Ages and think of all the water that has dripped from the rocks to form this grand work of nature. Water, and more water. But listen! Sounds like water? Sure it does. Sounds like a waterfall. Can't be. Yes—it is! Listen again—over here—its louder here! Yes, louder, but look where it comes from—a hole about 18 inches wide by 7 inches high, anyway 7 inches to the water! Ice cold, too. Dare we hope? We had gone through a lot already but not ice cold water and mud. Let's see, there's water, yes, 2 inches; mud, 3 inches. Fine stuff! Then one said as he took a new hold on his flashlight: "Here goes!" And with that he squeezes into the hole and water and mud! Hard to keep chin over water. Arms straight out trying to hold a light above water. Legs straight to the back, and tries to crawl. A job! Try it some day, but be sure to use water of 45 degrees.

But we couldn't make it that day. Too cold! We call it a day. The next morning it's the other fellow's turn to try and find the something we have heard. But the thought of getting into ice cold water! Oh, oh, poor me! But—say, the channel swimmers used grease! Good idea! Why not? So 5 pounds of axle grease is led out of the store that morning and is pressed into service on arrival on the field of battle. Five minutes later white man looks like black man, only blacker. A heavy union suit and a lot of clothing was draped on this black man, and down we go. By the time "Blackie" had climbed down two knotted ropes and squeezed through all the narrows he was apuffin' alright. At last—ready for the snake act, or fish act. Down he lies. The water soaks quickly through the clothes, and was it cold! As he thinks he is gasping his last, he manages to gasp the words: "It is too cold, this is impossible!" He turned. Saw the expression on his partner's face. That was enough! Stumped? No! And away he crawls, as slow as a crab. Chin and flashlight are barely above water as he disappears in the hole while the mud and silt work up his pants leg. What reception! Not even lukewarm! Soon, but it seemed like hours, he got to the obstruction which had

### *The Decorah Cavern and Ice Cave News*

to get down before we could get to the waterfall. This obstruction was tough, in fact so tough that we did not get to the waterfall until two days later. But what a waterfall we found! So big and fine! It was an answer to every caveman's prayers! Here we had a masterpiece of nature in the Rock of Ages, and now the largest and finest waterfall we had ever seen! Something to work for! But what work that was! But that's another long, long story.

It took us six days to get to the waterfall in July, 1935. In July, 1936, one year later, it takes you less than six minutes!

### THREE WATERFALLS IN DECORAH CAVERN

The largest waterfall in the Decorah Cavern is also the highest and finest in the Middle West. About five feet from this waterfall there is another separate waterfall fed by a very small spring, which by the way ran through the fifteen foot long hole through which we crawled to find our waterfalls. Now these two drop into the same pool and flow ten feet on where they make a sheer drop of great height—a third waterfall! The combined height of these three falls is more than 130 feet!

### *Dunning's Spring*

Not far away from the Ice Cave, around a corner in a ravine, is Dunning's Spring. Gushing from large rocks in the hillside, the sparkling water tumbles sixty feet down a rugged course on its way to the river. In an early day a man by the name of Dunning owned the property. He erected a mill below the spring, built a flume around the side of the hill and piped the water directly into the wheel pit. The waterfall was so great that it required only a six-inch wheel to turn the machinery. The mill is gone, but the spring goes on singing its merry ditty while on its way to join the not so gentle Oneota.

THANK YOU!

August, 1936.

One copy FREE. Extra copies—2 for 5c.

POSTER PRESS, DECORAH, IA.



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