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Lowell Burkhead

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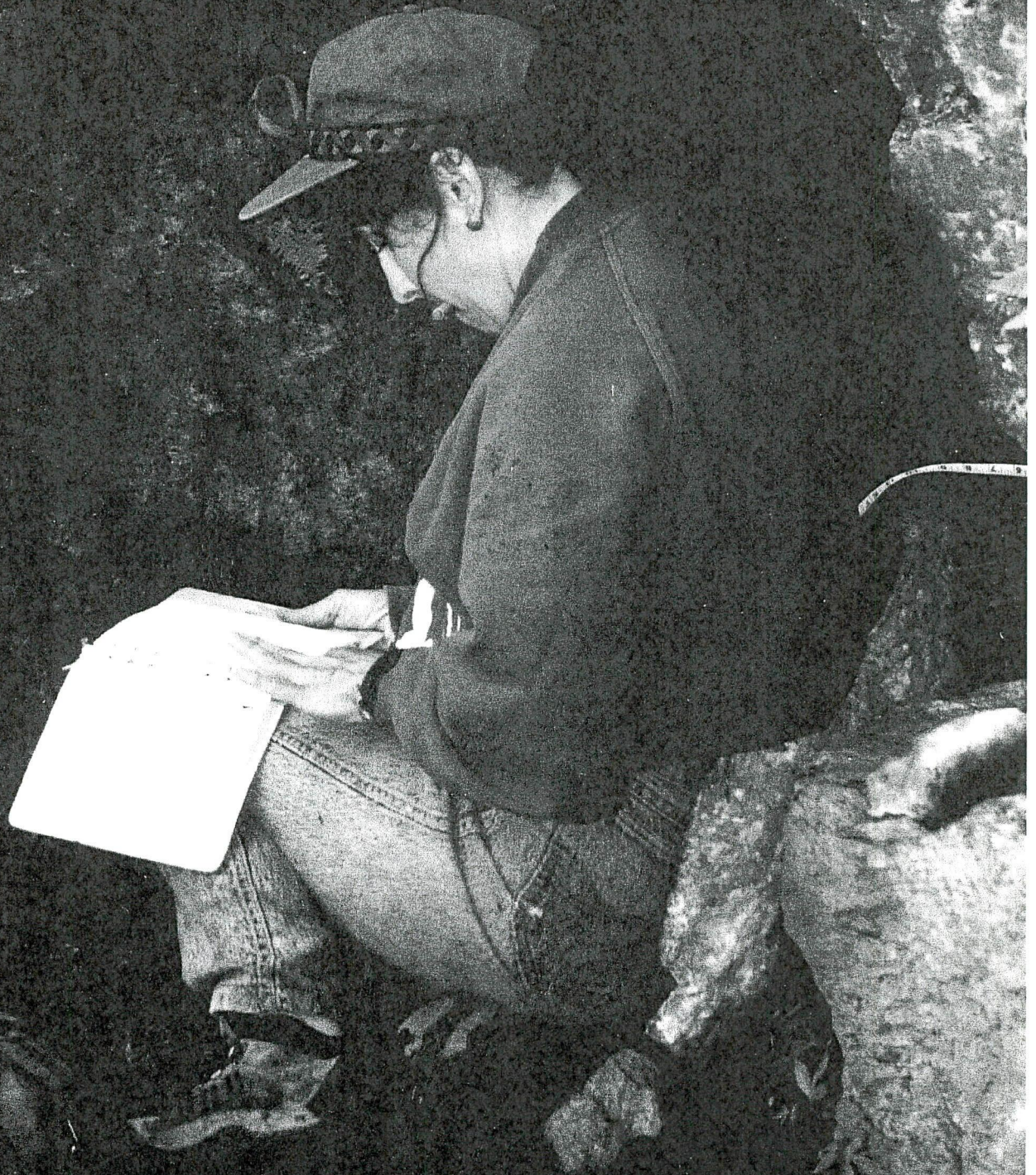
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INTERCOM

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Cave Rescue: Contact the Kentucky Disaster and Emergency Services Central Dispatch at 502-564-7815 for cave emergencies only in the NCRC Central Region of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Iowa Grotto Meetings: are the fourth Wednesday of each month, third Wednesday in December at 7:30 p.m. in room 125 or thereabouts of Trowbridge Hall on the campus of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Cover Photo: Pat Kambesis solo-surveying Barely Legal Cave, Jackson County, Iowa.
Photo by Lowell Burkhead



IOWA GROTTO
National Speleological Society
P. O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52244

Chairman - - - - - Mike Lace
Vice Chairman - - Lowell Burkhead
Secretary Treasurer - Phil LaRue

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IOWA GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting July 25, 2001

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 7:30 p.m. There were nine members present. Minutes from the June meeting were read and corrected. A treasurer's report was given which showed balances of \$1002.53 in the Coldwater fund; \$864.35 in the General fund; and \$141.00 in petty cash. TRIP REPORTS: Ed Klausner reported on a trip to Buffalo Ridge with Mike Lace, Chris Beck, Charlie Winterwood and Gerda Hartman where one cave was mapped. Phil LaRue reported on the resurvey trip to Hunt's Cave, Delaware Co. with Chris Beck, Ed Klausner, Pat Kambesis, Mike Nelson and Jim Roberts. He then reported on the resurvey trip at Coldwater with John Lovaas, Mike Nelson and Larry Welch to The First Right-Hand Side Passage. Mike Lace reported on his trip at Coldwater with Chris Beck and Ed Klausner to finish the resurvey at Monument Passage. Lowell Burkhead reported on a trip with Mike Bounk and several IDNR personnel to McLeod Spring in Cedar Rapids. FUTURE TRIPS: See the July Hotline and N.S.S. News for details. The Iowa Grotto annual picnic will be at Kendallville County Park, August 4-6. Doug Schmuecker is planning a Fall youth vertical training session. Summer trips are planned for Engelken Cave as is a lead checking trip to Floyd County. OLD BUSINESS: The Grotto Picnic was discussed. Volume III of the Iowa Cave Map Book will be available for \$25.00. Republished INTERCOM back issues are available. Contact Lowell B. for details. New Business: There was a brief discussion toward increasing Grotto membership dues. Greg McCarty brought attention to a recent article in the Des Moines Register that the IDNR is interested in purchasing a cave to protect bats. This brought about a discussion of the IDNR's record on protecting sensitive bat hibernation caves (i.e. Searryl's Cave). The recent cave accident in Pennsylvania was discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m..

Regular meeting August 22, 2001

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 7:30 p.m. There were six members present and one guest, N.S.S. member Ryan Butler. Minutes from the June meeting were read and approved. A treasurer's report was given which showed balances of \$747.67 in the Coldwater fund; \$956.27 in the General fund; and \$143.70 in petty cash. The picnic auction brought in \$256.25. TRIP REPORTS: Annual picnic; Mike Lace reported on the trip he led to Fiet Cave. Also visited were Decorah Ice Cave, Cave Man's and Cave Woman's Caves and the entrance to Glenwood Cave. He then reported that Doug Schmuecker led the trip to Wonder Cave with Nick Schmuecker, Pat Kambesis, Chris Beck, John Lovaas, and Jim Roberts. Mike also reported that prior to the picnic, he and Pat K. made a survey of Falcon Spring. Phil LaRue reported on the trip to Skunk Cave with Mark Jones, Dick Reth, Becky Reth, and Jim Roberts. He then reported on the trip to April Cave with Mike Lace, Ed Klausner, Elizabeth Miller, John Lovaas and Gary Engh. Ed Klausner reported on the trip to Wonder Cave prior to the picnic to do maintenance on the gate. A bat count was also made. He then reported on Coldwater weekend; he and Chris Beck did some mainstream passage restoration, while Mike L. and John L. did some digging at mysterious dome. FUTURE TRIPS: See the August Hotline and N.S.S. News for details. A Labor Day weekend trip is planned to April Cave. Restoration work is planned at Coldwater the third weekend in Sept. Doug Schmuecker is planning a Fall youth vertical training session. Summer trips are planned for Engelken Cave as is a lead checking trip to Floyd Co. OLD BUSINESS: Regarding the report at July's meeting that the IDNR is interested in acquiring a cave to protect bats, Mike L. reported that the cave is Hatfield's. Volume III of the Iowa Cave Map Book is available for \$25.00. All INTERCOM back issues are available for 7 cents per page. Contact Lowell Burkhead for orders. New Business: The INTERCOM deadline is September 1st. The November Grotto meeting is the fourth Wednesday this year. The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m..

LETTERS

Thank You

Most of the time you only read of trip reports in the INTERCOM, but I figured that it would be appropriate to acknowledge and thank some fellow cavers at this time in my caving career. I have been caving now for about five years and through that time I have learned a great deal about caving (and have much more to learn). Part of what I learned comes from self study but the real lessons were learned when I caved with experienced cavers. The Mark Twain Grotto and the Iowa Grotto have many fine people to learn from.

First, I would like to thank Mark Jones for sharing his enthusiasm and expertise. Mark is always conscious of cave safety and the impact people can have on a cave. Second, I would like to thank Pat Kambesis and Doug Schmuecker for making my first vertical experience in a cave both enjoyable and an intense learning experience. Third, I would like to thank Phil LaRue for his coaching abilities in negotiating some nasty cave terrain and his organization skills (Pam should be thanked too). And finally I would like to thank Pat, Phil, and Ed Klausner for introducing me to the art of cave surveying. All these people have helped me to expand my caving abilities and appreciate caves to a greater depth.

I can not forget to give a big thanks to all those in, and associated with the Iowa Grotto. Without them there would be no organization to be a part of. Everyone I have met has had something to contribute to my growth and enjoyment of caving. There would be a lengthy list if I tried to thank all of them. I just hope that I have or will contribute nothing but positive energy to the caving world. Again, thank you everyone and may we have many more years of caving to come.

Jim Roberts
Erie, Illinois

TRIP REPORTSTRIP REPORTSTRIP REPORTSTRIP REPORTS

SHIVER DOME AND MORE OF THE SAME

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

by Larry Welch

Survey activity continues at Coldwater Cave, but more and more it seems as if we are forced to be content doing resurvey. New cave is always a more savory treat, but it has been hard to come by lately at Coldwater. However, if you keep bashing your head against the wall, working hard, eating your vegetables, and avoiding the seven deadly sins, a reward may await the chaste and pure. We must have been purified to a sufficient extent, as we found our new cave in a very unlikely spot - along the well known and highly traveled main passage.

The story starts in September of 1999. Mark Jones, John Lovaas, Pat Kambesis and I had taken this trip to "finish" the mainstream resurvey by doing the stretch from the First Right-Hand Side Passage to the Equipment Cache. The latter spot was where we had traditionally tied our survey to the underwater survey done by Jagnow and Barnett to produce the line plot of the cave. Purportedly, this was the spot where the intrepid divers would stash their scuba gear after the trip in through the resurgence. Although I had been to the Cache several times, I had never ventured downstream from there. Mike Nelson had been down there once on a trip with me, and I do remember he went a ways using "Nelson Techniques" (upside down, nose to the ceiling, etc.). I wasn't as good a practitioner of these methods, but did want to see if we could milk a little more survey out of the passage so decided to take a look after we tied off our survey at the Equipment Cache. The little venture was encouraging, as I thought we could put in a couple hundred more feet and didn't hit a sump or any impassible area. It was going to be a cold one though, as it was mostly swimming past the cache.

We got around to surveying the passage beyond the Equipment Cache in April of 2000. It was an auspicious occasion: the retirement of Mike Nelson. This was the second retirement trip for Mike that I have been on, and given that he has recently been sighted in a wetsuit, I hope to participate in several more of these in the future. It was fitting for Mike that his retirement trip would involve aquatic activities like swimming and low airspace caving, as that was the sort of stuff where his legend was made. This is not the sort of trip that one would expect to be taking in April, as the cave is often in full flood at this time of year from snow-melt and spring showers. The water level was in fact still very low on this trip, essentially still at the low winter levels. You don't expect such good fortune with the water, but when it comes along, it is good to take advantage of the conditions.

Also along on the trip were Mark Jones and Chris Poe. Chris is a friend of mine who was to be handicapped by having to use one of my old wetsuits - these tend to be kind of chewed up and leaky. It would have been great for a short tourist trip, but kind of chilly for a swimming trip in April. Anyway, we made the trip in short order and started to survey. Mike set point, Mark read the compass, Chris did the rear tape, and I took book. It was a little bit tricky trying to sketch while swimming. On several occasions the book and compass men needed assistance to keep them from floating away while working. We ultimately surveyed something on the order of 150 feet where we tied off to a chip, shivering hard. The chip was set in a small domelet with rather low, but still passable, passage ahead. Everything bore signs of flooding with mud caking the ceiling to the extent that sprouts were growing out of the ceiling mud. I'm glad that Mike Nelson had some dexterity left, as I don't think I could have gotten the chip tied on properly in the domelet due to cold hands.

In the middle of the survey span, Mike located a passage leading to the right (west), which was a pleasant surprise. I had gone past it on the previous trip without seeing it, and as far as I know, it had never been entered or even sighted before. It was a very low tube hidden under a ledge with just a few inches of airspace. Most of the year this passage would be completely water-filled, which probably explained how it had remained hidden until then. It is possible that Jagnow and Barnett might have seen it, but then again, it might have been under water and if not, it was certainly unremarkable given all of the big virgin passages that lay ahead in those days. The passage didn't look terribly inviting - a scoured tube with 4 to 6 inches of air that went as far as one could illuminate. I was way too cold to even think about it, but Mike decided to have a go using "Nelson Techniques". He ultimately went in for about 50 feet, said it kept going without any change in airspace or passage character. When pressed for a passage name upon his exit, he coined it the More of the Same Passage. After his exit, we had to get moving right away to generate some heat. Poor Chris had turned into an icicle with the crappy wetsuit, and I recall that it took me 20 minutes or so of marching to warm up. It seemed unlikely that the More of the Same Passage would be seeing much future activity - how could you survey it? It seemed more a novelty than anything else.

We revisited the far downstream area during February of 2001. The water level was very low, yet the sumps upstream had refused to open. We had talked about digging upstream to try to open them, but it just seemed like a waste of time to me, given that the spring thaw would probably obliterate all the work. Mark Jones and I decided to try some of the downstream sumps instead. The water was extremely cold - probably in the 30's. I had been intending to get a new wetsuit, but had not managed to get the job done yet. As a result, I froze in the cold water, although Mark had a much better suit and had less trouble. Our first goal was the sump at the end of the First Right-Hand Side Passage. We got very chilled just going out the FRHSP to the sump, putting on all of our warm gear well before the section requiring immersion. Both of us easily got through the first low airspace OK; the second was a bit more tricky, but we both managed to work our way out there too.

I had not been any further than the room past the 2nd low airspace. On an earlier trip with Mike Nelson and Jack Decker we had surveyed two more shots to another room, but I had stayed behind and sketched from the room. I had a false start on the

3rd low airspace wearing my helmet, but finally ditched it and things went smoother. There was probably 3 inches of air in this short jump that led to kind of a ceiling pocket - I wouldn't call it a room. On the other side of the pocket and slightly left the next low airspace took off. This one was pretty similar in terms of airspace, but seemed a bit longer than the prior stretch. I was surprised at the size of the room on the other side. You could stand up here, and the survey chip marking the frontier was still in place. A skinny little dome went up 25 feet or so on the right side of the room and over to the left, the next low airspace took off. The passage ahead looked relatively straight with few landmarks.

At this point I was so cold that I was having a hard time thinking straight, and was shivering too hard to slide smoothly through low airspace. Mark was two low spots behind me, and I started to feel like I had gone far enough. I went a couple of feet into the 5th low airspace, didn't see any signs of the subway-sized dome or any comfortable spot, then backed out. In addition to being crazy cold, for some reason I was getting dizzy and was having a hard time standing up in the room before this last canal. I headed back through the two low airspaces to where Mark was, then had a full-scale case of the spins. I wanted to wait until my equilibrium was better, but was way too cold to sit for long so we started moving once the spins had slowed to a crawl, heading back to the mainstream. It was a little bit frustrating, because there was airspace ahead. I cursed myself for not starting the winter with a better wetsuit, which would have made a difference.

Once back to the main passage, Mark and I decided to look at the main passage beyond where we had placed the chip on the April survey trip. The passage indeed kept going, but was lower than before. There was one more ceiling joint "room" not far beyond our survey, then the ceiling started to drop. The airflow stagnated and the air was warm and stuffy, indicating a likely sump ahead. As I went further, the current started to increase a bit, suggesting to me that the water was probably being accelerated down into a U-tube sump. Mark had waited back at the survey chip, and I decided that I had gone far enough once I felt the current increase. I turned around and headed back, probably not more than 100 feet past the end of our previous survey.

I was a little bit frustrated with the meager return on these two pushes. Despite the cold, I decided to have a go at the More of the Same Passage when we reached it. Mark was pretty toasty in his new wetsuit, and was happy to hang onto my helmet and offer me a light. The water level was slightly lower than when Mike had been in there, and it looked as if there was 5 inches of space or so at the start. There were a few little stalactite knobs, but otherwise few passage features. You had to stay left, as the airspace tailed off to the right. Locomotion was difficult. The usual Nelson technique of pushing off on the ceiling tended to bounce one's bottom off the sandy passage floor, creating drag. I ended up putting a hand under my butt and pushing off with it while using the other hand on the ceiling to steer. After 60-70 feet, little had changed. A little bit further ahead the ceiling started to drop, and soon the airspace had tapered down a bit. Although the passage wasn't narrow, I wasn't sure I could turn around under these conditions, so started to contemplate backing out. However, just ahead, I could see some flowstone in what looked to be a ceiling rise, and decided to head up there and turn around. Sure enough, there was an extra foot of airspace up there, and turning around was a piece of cake.

Shining a light ahead, one could see the low airspace canal continuing, but it looked as if there might be another room just ahead. This didn't seem far to go, so I went back into position and slid through the canal. The room turned out to be a 15-foot dome. I stood up and admired the dome, which was later named Shiver Dome. Nice draperies, pretty spot, but it seemed pretty terminal. It had kind of a funny deep pool in the back of the dome. I wasn't sure if that was a continuation or just an undercut ledge, but there didn't look to be any airspace and I knew the water was damn low. After all the grief I hear from Mike Lace about finding new domes, I was going to make sure he heard about this one. Once the uncertainty of the passage was not a factor, it was much easier to traverse and I had no problems coming out. Upon hitting the main passage again, I was struck by how cool it would be to survey the

passage, knowing we were in no condition to do so. It didn't seem very likely we would have many good chances to do so when the passage was actually open, and this would coincide with cold winter water. Could anyone even read a compass in that low-airspace canal?

Amazingly enough, the following month the water level was still down, a very unusual thing for March. I had thought long and hard about how we could survey back to Shiver Dome, and had a plan that I thought might work. Mark Jones was eager to try it again, and John Lovaas also threw his hat in the ring. John is seemingly immune to cold water, and Mark had kept very warm in his new wetsuit the previous month, so they were ideal partners to attempt the survey. The water was not as cold as the previous month, but still had that winter chill.

Once down to the passage, we ran a short shot from the survey chip to the mouth of the canal, then I took the lead into the passage. The plan was to set a station in the lowest airspace portion, where the passage took a subtle turn to the left. If all went well, we could then shoot to this position from the dome or from the ceiling pocket in front of it, averting having to read the compass in the low airspace. I went in on lead and found a little ceiling knob for a station that looked as if it would work. John pulled out his compass while I willed him to hurry, and Mark sketched the splendor of the More of the Same Passage. After John took his bearing, he came up to man the station while I did a backsight to it from up ahead. He, no doubt, was willing me to hurry. Once this was complete it was a simple task to survey into and across the dome. While Mark sketched the dome, John poked into the pool in the rear of the dome. There was indeed a continuation there. John got about a body length in before the airspace dropped to an inch. He felt around with his foot and could feel enough passage room, but it was all underwater. We packed up our gear and headed out with 120 feet of survey. Having wondered whether we would ever get this passage surveyed, it felt very good having actually accomplished it. Incidentally, this was Mark's first survey book, and it wasn't too bad. John was so revved by the formations in the dome, he is talking about trying to get back there again sometime with a camera. We stopped for a little digging in the First Right-Hand Side Passage, then made our way back to the surface after a productive and satisfying trip.

BUFFALO RIDGE CAVE

Buffalo Ridge Cave and several unopened sinks, Dubuque County, Iowa

June 30, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Gerda Hartman, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace, Charlie Winterwood, and Al Wolter

We had been waiting for several months to visit a sinkhole that one of Gerda Hartman's neighbors knew about in Dubuque. We were finally able to arrange a trip on June 30th. Gary, Mike and I met Chris in Dubuque and then headed over to Gerda's house where Charlie Winterwood was also waiting for us. Our last stop before checking in with the landowner, was at Al Wolter's place. Al led us to a sinkhole entrance with little trouble, despite the thick brush. With a small amount of house cleaning around the entrance, Chris descended the fissure cave. He suggested that I rig a rope and use vertical gear as the climb down was exposed. Since Chris is bigger than me, I didn't have to think twice. It was 26 feet to the floor and a shot in each direction gave us a total of a bit over 47 feet. There was only a small amount of flowstone and a bit of fine popcorn. For the second week in a row, we were not in a raccoon cave and it was a pleasure.

While we were surveying, Gary located another hole that needed some work. With a hammer and chisel, we were able to get in far enough to see that the fissure was too tight to ever be entered by any of us, so it was on to the next cave.

Our next stop was a sinkhole that was most easily reached by crossing the abbey's land. We stopped briefly to chat with one of the sisters before heading off to the sinkhole. That was the first time our group had been blessed before caving. The sinkhole, unfortunately, was too plugged to enter. Reports of the hole indicate that it has been open pretty wide, so it will be worth checking again in a few years.

We were off again to another nearby area. A very promising sinkhole has been repeatedly filled by the landowner to no avail. After some digging while Gary belayed me, I could see some narrow passage. In a few years the fill dirt may be washed away enough to let us enter. Two more nearby sinks were also investigated. They were less promising, but worth another look in a few years. It was getting late and started to rain, so we agreed to continue our Dubuque work on another weekend.

SMALL CAVE PROJECT

Leash Cave, Cadaverous Cave, Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky
July 5, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Kenna Brophay, Ed Klausner, Jeff Marts, and Jason Walz

The Small Cave Project of the Cave Research Foundation and Mammoth Cave National Park has the objective of finding and mapping the small caves within the park. Several months ago, Scott House sent me the notes from a 1997 survey of Cadaverous cave. It was somewhat difficult to use the notes and draft a map, so a field check of the cave was in order. I had planned on field checking it in February, but the Green River was too high due to recent rains and the ferry was not running, so the trip was delayed until some future date.

My wife, Elizabeth, daughter Hannah, and I arrived towards the end of the CRF week long expedition when there weren't many people left for survey teams. Fortunately, two summer interns from the park arrived (Jason and Kenna), so we set out to locate Leash Cave to survey it, and Cadaverous Cave to field check and inventory. Both were close together, so if we found one, we would hopefully find the second. We had GPS readings, but when Jeff entered them into his GPS, we were informed that we were 80 miles away, not the 1/2 mile indicated by the survey notes. It took us close to 2 hours, but we finally found Leash Cave despite the small entrance and heavy brush.

Leash Cave started as an easy slope down into a small room. A canyon passage off the entrance room quickly turned into a phreatic tube that got progressively smaller. The tube made a loop, so we did both forward and back sights to make sure we had good closure on the survey, even though it became more and more difficult to do backsights. By the end of the tube, it was only 1 1/2 feet high by about 2 feet wide. The park requires that 4 people be on all CRF trips within the park. Four people don't fit too well into a small, long tube. Once we were back to the entrance area, all that was left was two shots for an additional 20 feet of passage off the entrance room. All in all, we surveyed about 160 feet of passage.

Cadaverous Cave was relatively easy to find once we knew our location on the topo map at Leash Cave. The original survey notes did not have the entrance area, so I sketched them in along with a few cross sections to indicate the connection between the upper passage and lower passage. Actually, there were two lower passages, not just one. While I annotated the original survey notes, Kenna did an inventory with the help of Jason and Jeff. They found the bones of some large animal (cow, horse?) that had teeth marks on them. Cadaverous Cave was a bit over 220 feet long with some nice flowstone areas in the lower level.

Ridgewalking in Kentucky was easier in July than I thought. It turned out to be about 10 degrees cooler than Iowa that day and there were no multiflora roses to deal with.

OUT OF THE PARK

Adwell Cave, Dogwood Cave, Out of Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

July 6, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Ed and Hannah Klausner

Hannah was too young to be allowed into the park on a CRF trip and it was my day to do something with her. My wife, Elizabeth, was in Long Cave helping with a paleontology study. Fortunately, there is a cave on CRF property (Adwell Cave) and a cave down the road on private land for which we had permission to enter. We started out looking for Adwell Cave, named for the Adwell family who lived on Flint Ridge. We couldn't locate it, not surprising as we were over 1/2 mile away based on different directions that we got when we returned to the CRF facility in Hamilton Valley. Instead of looking for Adwell again, we had a snack and decided to look for Dogwood Cave.

Dogwood was easy to find and quite surprising. The trunk passage is about 30 feet by 30 feet and several hundred feet long. Besides the nice formations, there was a waterfall at the back that was 20 feet high in a dome area. The bottom of the dome is a dig site and looks inviting.

With the new directions to Adwell, we located it quickly. The sinkhole entrance leads to some sizable trunk passage 40 or so feet wide and about 20 feet high. There are some nice columns near the entrance. Unfortunately, after a few hundred feet, the passage ends in rubble from a collapsed sinkhole. There was evidence of digging on each side of the passage. If there is a way past the breakdown, there may be significantly more cave.

We enjoyed the two caves, especially since we were not expecting anything so big. It turned out to be a great way to spend the day while Elizabeth dug through guano looking for bat bones and recording their length.

HUNT'S CAVE RESURVEY

Hunt's Cave, Delaware County, Iowa

July 14, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Pat Kambesis, Ed Klausner, Phil LaRue, Mike Nelson, and Jim Roberts

Hunt's Cave was surveyed to a length of 343 feet by Carney, Dvorak, Wymore and Hedges in 1958. The published map had no cross sections, profile view, or floor details as was the current standard. This significant cave in Delaware County needed a resurvey to add these features to the map, so Mike Lace put it on our list for this year. We kept putting it off as we had new areas to ridgeward and had been to Hunt's Cave before. By mid July, ridgewarding was almost impossible as the underbrush was too dense to find entrances, so a known cave seemed like a good way to spend a hot summer day.

We met in Hopkinton, drove to the cave and split into two survey teams. Pat, Chris and Mike decided to start at the entrance and survey towards the Pentagon Room. Phil, Jim and I were to set a chip in the Pentagon Room and survey one of the four remaining passages that lead out of this room. I was only too happy to comply as the entrance passage is low and long and I knew there was a tall canyon passage leading out of the Pentagon Room. Pat knew this too, but still wanted to survey the entrance passage.

The first time I visited the cave, I thought the entrance crawl was about 200 feet long. It is really just over 100 feet. We set a chip in the center of the Pentagon Room and started the survey towards the Canyon Passage. The canyon becomes tall (17 feet in some spots) but is quite narrow on the bottom and it is much easier to survey by running the survey line half way up. Most of our shots were over 10 feet,

although the passage is serpentine in shape.

Pat's team was more experienced than our team, and subsequently finished the entrance passage and the three other small tubes leading off the main room before we had gone 120 feet down the Canyon Passage. They went to the back of the Canyon Passage and surveyed towards us. In the end, we surveyed 452 feet, about 100 feet more than the 1958 survey. I haven't drafted the map yet to compare it to the 1958 map, but I suspect we pushed each of the passages further.

The cave was quite dry and wonderfully free of dead animals and raccoon droppings. The last two have been common occurrences and probably explain why we were not all excited about the resurvey. We saw no bats in the cave. During winter visits, hibernating bats can be expected.

Once out of the cave, we had a bit of a rest while Jim went back to retrieve his flashlight. Back at the trucks, we were treated to some cake by Mike. It seemed like a very civilized way to end a successful caving trip.

MONUMENT PASSAGE

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

July 20, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Ed Klausner, and Mike Lace

It had been relatively dry for the past few weeks and the water level (0.78) would make for a comfortable trip downstream. Larry Welch wanted to resurvey part of First Right-Hand Side Passage and try to lower the water level past the 152 foot dome. That area has, at least, several hundred feet of unsurveyed passage that was entered by Doug Schmucker during a period of unusually low water levels. Larry took Phil LaRue, John Lovaas and Mike Nelson, while Chris Beck, Mike Lace and I decided on a trip to Monument Passage.

Some of Monument needed to be resurveyed. There was cut around that had never been surveyed. Chris wanted to look at his restoration to see if it held, and we wanted to look at the dig at the end of the known passage. The trip downstream was easy with the low water level. Monument Passage, however, turned out to be harder than we expected. There was deep, sucking mud along the entire length. None of us had ever seen it like this before. In addition, there was organic debris noted on the ceiling starting near The Pillar of Light Arising from the Lake of Divine Reasoning. This indicates a recent (within the last few months) flood event. We were curious to see if the flooding washed out any sediment at the end of the known passage (water flows away from the main passage in Monument Passage).

We decided to survey on the way in, so we found a chip near the short passage leading to The Pillar of Light Arising from the Lake of Divine Reasoning and started the resurvey. We didn't want to track mud on the pristine flowstone near the Pillar, so for the last shot, Chris removed his wetsuit top and boots and carefully set a station. We would have put flagging tape across the entrance to the area to keep muddy footprints off the formations, but we didn't have any flagging tape with us.

The next stop was to look at the restoration Chris had done a few years ago. It held nicely and the stalactite was still attached. With water flowing over it, new calcite will be deposited and the scar will hopefully be erased.

There is a low, cut-around further down the passage that has never been surveyed, so that was our next undertaking. It turned out to be about 50 feet long and only a foot or so high. This will add to the total surveyed length of Coldwater. The floor was flat and covered with a nice layer of wet mud, so sliding through was not difficult. The recent flooding did not appear to wash open the end of Monument, nor did it appear to silt it shut. There is still digging potential and the hope of significant passage continuing.

WESTWARD, HO!!!

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa
July 22, 2001

by Independent Iowa Caver, Mike Nelson

Saturday at Coldwater Cave was brutally hot and humid. Luckily, Larry Welch had just the trip in mind to take advantage of those surface conditions. My big concern was that the weather would persist. The previous weekend I had stopped by Wild Well Cave. My main intent was to visit with the landowners who had become the dearest of friends. Not finding them home, I ventured on foot down to The Well to check the conditions and kill a little time. Due to the overgrowth of the undergrowth, I was a bloody mess from the thighs on down upon my return. Also upon my return, Sandy and Frank were found to be home. With their blessings, I had intended to return this weekend for some badly needed trail maintenance.

Luck was on my side. Even though the oppressive heat and humidity enveloped most of the state, a cloud cover and a nice breeze kept things moderated enough to perform this service. Still, even pacing myself on the weed whacker and chainsaw produced copious quantities of sweat. By the time I reached The Well itself, a break was long past due.

The rise pool was within a foot of flowing down the surface stream but the water escaping now could be heard running through the rocks on the south side of the entrenchment/collapse feature. It sounded like I imagined a train would sound in a not too far off subway tunnel. The looks of the abandoned streambed told me it had been some time since Wild Well had experienced a "cleansing event". The rise pool proper confirmed this. Previously, with the water lower, it was no big deal to gear up before scrambling down into the water and walking back into the cavern zone. The diving commenced 12 to 14 feet back into the cave. Had the water been that low now, it would have been a bit of a chore to roll the tanks into the horizontal slot that was the present opening. One would then have had to squeeze in behind them and gear up in the overhead. As it was, gearing up on the flat ground and side mount diving with the now water-filled entrance room wouldn't have been too difficult.

In my heat induced delusion, climbing in and shuffling some of the rock out of the area of the immediate entrance seemed an ideal way of cooling off. So I donned minimal gear and went to it. As I was lifting slabs from their comfortable angle of repose and flinging them out on dry land, it became readily apparent that the leading lip of the cave was unstable. So I switched to pulling off loose slabs from that front edge of the cave ceiling, under water. When that all felt stable and refused to relinquish any more possible future nasty surprises, I moved back to the top side. Here I removed a lot of overburden in the form of mud and loose chips and slabs. When a sufficient amount of that was moved away, I tackled the Galena, per se. By the time I was satisfied that nothing more could be removed, six feet of the Wild Well had moved six inches west right before my very eyes in about an hour's time.

Of course this advance was augmented with human assistance. Though the rate of migration was artificially enhanced, to my casual observation, I had merely hastened a natural process. I feel quite safe in concurring with previous speculations that Wild Well is migrating in the general direction of northern Fayette County. How rapidly it is doing this is dependent to a greater or lesser degree upon climatic conditions. All seriousness aside, cooled off, I returned to slashing away at the flora, still clad in my wetsuit, of course. I made repeated trips back to the cave to keep cool and remove rocks from the rise pool floor.

On one of these trips, I found a piece of dive line about 20 feet long that had once been laid in the cave. Upon being expelled, one end was snagged on a rock in the pool while the other end was cast down the overflow run and buried in an inch or two of mud and rocks. This truly does help one to gauge the force of the water coming out of The Well without truly reaching the force needed for it to maintain its own natural entrance.

I took a great deal of pleasure in floating in that tiny rise pool, watching the water clear up, listening to the "subway" and soaking in Wild Well's idyllic micro-ecology. On my last trip down, I took along my dive goggles and dive light. As clear as the water seemed in the rise pool, The Well is yet a long way from being divable. There wasn't five feet of visibility. The normal 15 to 20 feet seems about minimum for safe exploration. Hopefully, the approach trail and cave entrance are now a tad more accommodating for diving in the near future.

NSS CONVENTION

NSS Convention, Mount Vernon, KY Great Salt Petre Cave Preserve

July 22-27, 2001

by Liz Robinson

Liz Robinson and Brad Smith and about 1500 other people

Brad and I left for Convention after work on Thursday in order to get some shopping done before heading into camp and get a decent camping spot. When we finally arrived in the campground there was already a big crowd there and a lot of spaces were taken up, but we found a nice spot near the Greater Allentown Grotto (GAG) space that was reasonably level though very hot. Saturday we just hung around the campground visiting with other people in the miserable heat. We did go to town for dinner. The road to town was winding, steep, and generally rather hazardous. It was not a road you would want to drive fast on.

The geology field tour was Sunday morning. They also had a hydrogeology field tour and an historic tour all going out from the school since the buses could not handle the road to the campground. We looked at the usual road cuts that the tour passes and for lunch we went to a park with a decent picnic shelter that was pretty nice. After that we went to Sloans Valley Cave, the Railroad Bridge entrance. Fortunately we had a half hour or forty five minutes underground where it was nice and cool and - well, underground! It was a good horizontal passage and easy enough for most everyone to get in. We had been forewarned to bring hard-hats, lights and wear long pants so this finally gave us a payoff from the heat. After Sloans Valley we went to Cumberland Falls State Resort Park which was the last stop on the tour. For those of us who do not indulge in beer, it gave us a chance to replenish our "non adult" beverage supply and get some ice cream.

Monday when the convention opened we did not get into town because there was a digging section workshop at the Great Salt Petre Cave which was on the campground. Brad and I both worked at the dig at the Dressing Room Passage which was filled in with soil that contained a lot of gypsum crystals. The gypsum crystals looked and felt on the skin like piece of broken glass. The dig paid off in enlarged passage and vertical as well as horizontal movement. We continued to work the dig until the noise from setting up the band for the Howdy Party blasted us out of the area.

Brad and I were the last two people to leave the dig and on our way out we caught up with a guided tour of the cave. The tour was extremely interesting, pointing out some historical and geological sites that we would not have happened upon by ourselves and into parts of the cave that were not lit electrically. It took us to another entrance to the cave also. We were therefore in the cave another hour and a half after all the diggers left.

The food was served outside for the Howdy Party and then people went in to the cave for beers, soda and the music. We could not stay in the cave because the music was much too loud. A lot of other people felt the same way as they had congregated at the entrance.

The remainder of the week we got to the 3-D slide show with Peter Bosted (The Bosteds do a 3-D slide show every year at Convention.) and went to a few of the sessions, including History and some of the exploration sessions. The videos which were numerous this year were shown on a TV VCR setup outside of the auditorium. As

usual we looked around at the vendors and I paid my NSS dues which were due in August. I got to meet the new NSS employee and apparently they have been getting her underground. Brad went on a 20 minute through cave trip on Friday with the Randy Gandy Caving Group. Thursday we went to the Photo Salon at Renfro Valley which is a country music theater. Wednesday was the campground party. Again they had music in the cave (Terminal Siphons) but again it was too loud for our poor little sensitive ears.

Finally the rain came and broke the drought they had been having here. You know that when too many people are gathered together in the name of caving, rain happens. One night the staff of the convention sponsored a pizza party and there was plenty for all to eat well. It saved the cost and trouble of a dinner. This was a first for me. The first time that the Howdy Party food and the banquet food were both good. The banquet was held in the school gymnasium. Dave Jagnow, formerly of Iowa Grotto got the honorary membership award which was nice.

We packed up quickly Saturday and headed off to the Renfro Valley Post office so I could mail some bills. Unfortunately the last mail pickup out of the post office was some 45 minutes before it closed. I had never heard of such a thing, so I had to wait until Monday to mail them. We went back to the campground to help the Jacksons pack up the sauna and tub stuff in their trailer. They had a real nice setup with the tub, nice shelves for clothes and a cooler with lemonade and ice water. It did a good job of cutting down on the very dangerous excessive drinking in the area and overall provided a nice touch.

We finally left around 5 p.m. and got back to Milan Sunday afternoon or evening. Next year's convention will be the week of June 24 in Camden Maine on the seacoast in one of those picturesque little New England towns. Brad and I will be attending as we are on the Convention Committee. There will be a sloop ride for every attendee and the Howdy Party will offer the option of a lobster for another \$6. And yes, there are caves there. There is the mascot Claude, the lobster who is the biggest lobster I have ever seen and the only live red one. I am not aware that any other conventions have been set up after 2003 in Porterville, CA.

UNHINGED IN WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Wonder Cave, Lester Spring, April Cave, Glenwood Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
 July 28, 2001 by Ed Klausner
 Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace, and John Lovaas

The hinge on the gate at Wonder Cave needed to be replaced because it was getting rusty and was hard to open. We planned on a trip to Wonder Cave during the annual picnic in August, so repairing the gate seemed like a good project for the weekend. Chris found some better hinges and brought tools and a generator. The new hinges will be easier to maintain and keep rust free.

There were five of us and a relatively small place to work. Mike asked if I wanted to drop down the first pit and count bats - tough choice. John also had vertical gear, so we both took a close look at the cave searching for bats and admiring the fragile beauty of some of the newly forming speleothems. There was a delicate calcite raft forming in one pool along with some nice crystals. One of the pools also contained several small invertebrates that John thought were springtails. A macro lens would be handy here.

All in all, we counted no bats as we didn't see any. We did note an unusual amount of sediment on the floor in one area. We were careful to wash it off our boots before entering the area of rimstone dams.

There is a lead on the opposite wall of the first dome pit. John used the ladder stored in the dome and poked into the lead. It is enterable and goes for over 10 feet

before it winds out of view. Nylon coveralls seem like to clothes to wear as the passage was grabby, low, and wet.

As we were finishing, Chris, Gary and Mike were just finishing up with the gate. The next stop was Lester's Spring. Mike and I dug open the entrance in May of 2000 and could see 20 feet or so into the cave. We could see as far as a pool inside the entrance and what we thought was a passage beyond the pool. We needed wetsuits to continue, so we put off exploring until some other trip.

We thought the cave would be open as there hadn't been much rain lately. We were surprised to see that water was pouring out of the spring and the cave was sumped. It turned out that none of us brought neoprene gloves and all got our hands cold removing rocks from the spring in hopes of lowering the water level. The water was quite cold and we couldn't work long without warming up our hands. The water level dropped noticeably, but not enough to enter the cave. We'll look again when we're in the area to see if our rock removal helped lower the water level further.

The last two stops of the day were just to see the water level. With Lester Spring high, we wondered about April Cave. Surprisingly, the cave looked enterable, so we have a trip planned for the near future. Glenwood, on the other hand, had no water flowing out of the entrance, but it was sumped just inside the entrance. Glenwood won't be open for a while.

IOWA GROTTO PICNIC - 2001

Kendallville County Park, Winneshiek County, Iowa
August 4-6, 2001

by Mike Lace

Whatever pagan rituals had been performed in the preceding weeks to chase away the rain and heat had paid off in spades as we enjoyed a brief window of "cooler" weather for the weekend. A collection of 29 cavers, family friends and cave owners gathered at Kendallville for the annual Grotto Picnic.

The Caver Auction introduced one treasure after another and raising \$255. The struggle for these treasures was brisk while we saw a new trend emerge - bidding on an item with the stipulation that it specifically go to another caver. I think we'll see this again! All the auction paraphernalia went home with someone ... whether they wanted them or not.

The squeezebox claimed at least two victims, old and young alike, who had become firmly wedged in its hungry maw. Future plans to make the ordeal in the box more sporting were discussed, including a sideways or even vertical squeeze as well as a stream of water flowing through it for that realistic cave feel. Here are the adult and kid winners and a few of the highlights:

First rescue from the box - Mike Nelson
Adult winner: Pat Kambesis - 6 1/2"
Kid winner: Becky R. - 5 1/2"

Thanks to everyone who braved the road construction to join us and the many who brought auction stuff and various dishes to create the feast we've come to look forward to every year. Thanks to the trip leaders who got folks underground in some of Iowa's finest caves and back again. See you next year!

BEAUTIFUL WONDER CAVE

Wonder Cave, Winnesheik County, Iowa
August 4, 2001

by Mark Jones

Chris Beck, Pat Kambesis, Mark Jones, Doug & Nick Schmuecker, John Lovaas, Jim Roberts

The Iowa Grotto returned to beautiful Kendallville Park in Winneshiek County, Iowa, site of the 1998 Grotto Picnic, to serve as picnic headquarters. A small group of cavers assembled for the weekend festivities. At 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, Chris Beck led a trip to Wonder Cave outside of Decorah, Iowa. This cave was a commercial venture until the 70's when it was closed for business. The Iowa Grotto continues to maintain good landowner relations by inventorying bats and inspecting and maintaining the gate. By 11:30 a.m. everyone was ready to get underground. Walking around the old tourist building, we broke a trail through some small underbrush to reach the cave entrance.

A straight tunnel slowly dropped for 50 feet before turning sharply to the right where the gate is installed. Jim was excited about his first vertical cave and Pat tutored (more like tortured) him on the proper rigging technique and rope use. With all the professional vertical cavers, (Pat, Chris & Doug), Jim was given several good pointers to insure the safest possible descent. Once rigged, Jim was given the honor of dropping first, using his rack to control his descent. Pat followed, then me, John and Doug assisting Nick. Once down the 30 foot vertical drop, Pat and Chris took Jim ahead to rig the big pit while John and I took our time admiring the scenery.

The blasting for the commercial trail years ago had given the water a new route to travel into the system and my, how it has changed the trail! Rimstone dams, flowstone, stalactites are all growing at amazing rates all along the cut, making a better cave than had existed. Carefully stepping over the formations we observed several rimstone pools on the lefthand ledge that contained tiny creatures. John took this opportunity to photograph the sight while I moved up to the pit area.

Once again Jim was rigging the 60 foot drop with Pat and Chris supervising. Jim dropped first, with Pat and Chris not far behind. I soon followed to grab any treasure awaiting at the bottom. From the top of the rigging I worked through the old stairs, dropped to a small ledge, another small ledge and finally the "BIG DROP". Suspended above the pit, I watched as people below scurried amongst the debris in search of riches. A waterfall splashed into a pool below where the rope was rigged, so an invigorating shower was had by all. Expecting the coins to be all gone by the time I arrived, I took my time in sliding down the rope.

Once untethered from the line I began my search for treasure in Wonder Cave. I started moving rocks to find only broken glass and debris before "presto", a penny. I searched the 10 by 20 foot pit while the others peeked into the 15 foot drain passage. No matter where you stood in the pit, water dripped down you neck and back and soaked into your gear. Chris eventually found a penny and everyone was ready to make the ascent. Since this was Jim's first climb in a cave, his ascenders weren't adjusted to his body so he had a tough time moving up the rope, but he slowly gained the top. I thought that Chris and I would tie on the number of coins, but he found a penny on the ledge as he ascended to end up with \$.02. My gear worked well on this climb resulting in me making the stairs in five minutes. An enjoyable trip out capped off a great cave experience. Total cave time was 4 hours. On the way, out we thanked the landowners for their kindness.

2001 IOWA GROTTTO PICNIC

Skunk Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

by Mark Jones

Becky (Dick's daughter, the smallest to go through the squeezebox) and her father Dick Reth, Jim Roberts, Phil LaRue and I got out of the campground at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday morning to visit nearby Skunk Cave.

The last time I'd been there was three years ago when Phil had introduced me to this mazy cave. Within five minutes we'd reached the hillside entrance along a gravel road. A short climb brought us to a squarish opening that ran back into the hill and down. We stayed up near the ceiling since to drop down would have resulted in us getting wedged between the walls. Twenty-five feet into the cave the route took a sharp right that also dropped ten feet to a wider floor. Dick was unable to navigate this drop and opted to wait outside while we explored beyond. Upon reaching the floor the temperature fell to the 60's making this an excellent activity for the start of a hot, muggy day.

Jim led us into a stretch of gooey mud floor that about sucked our boots right off our feet. A minute later Jim had reached the tight constriction to the majority of the cave. A reverse stoopwalk was required to work through this spot and Phil did a fine job of talking Jim to the other side. Becky waltzed on with no effort. Phil on the other hand couldn't seem to get his technique going and moved aside for me to try. Shifting my pack around and slimming down a bit allowed me to work my way past the constriction. Phil continued to try to get by, but he wasn't able to join us on this trip. The three remaining cavers set off for adventure in the shoulder-wide canyons and oozing mud.

In 1998 I referred to this cave having several "piddles out into a coon crawl" (POIACC), nothing had changed that fact as every path eventually POIACC. We chimneyed above a narrow canyon to crawl and climb our way around much of the cave. Becky did a fine job of caving in spite of the fact that this was her first weekend of "wild caving". Thirty minutes of poking into passages that POIACC and we were ready to go. On the way out Jim decided to take the narrow canyon route instead of chimneying. He moved quickly and the canyon may just appear to be tighter than it really is. Returning to the constriction we had no trouble sliding to the other side since we were covered in mud. Phil assisted us in making the final climb to the entrance. We spent 75 wonderful minutes in Skunk Cave.

CWC AUGUST

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
August 18, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace, John Lovaas and Mike Nelson

As soon as Mike and I took the cover off the shaft on Friday night, we knew from the sound of the stream below that the water level was low. The CO2 level also appeared to be low. Unfortunately, it was supposed to rain that night and all the next day, so any plans for the following day would have to take that into account. Larry Welch wanted to survey in the Sinus Passage, but he was not feeling well and the lousy weather forecast kept him home for the weekend. The Sinus is not the place to be when it is raining.

It rained late on Friday night and on Saturday morning so we took our time getting to and eating breakfast in Harmony. We finally decided on two trips. Mike and John headed off to dig on Mysterious Dome. We calculated that there had been at least four other trips there within the last two years to open up the passage and reach the dome. Mike worked at the dig site while John brought out the debris that Mike scooped back along the passage. It is difficult working in the confined space and they made two to three feet of progress before calling it a day. Mike is confident that we will reach the dome soon, but I've heard this before. At least we're pretty sure there is a dome as we can hear the dripping water echo.

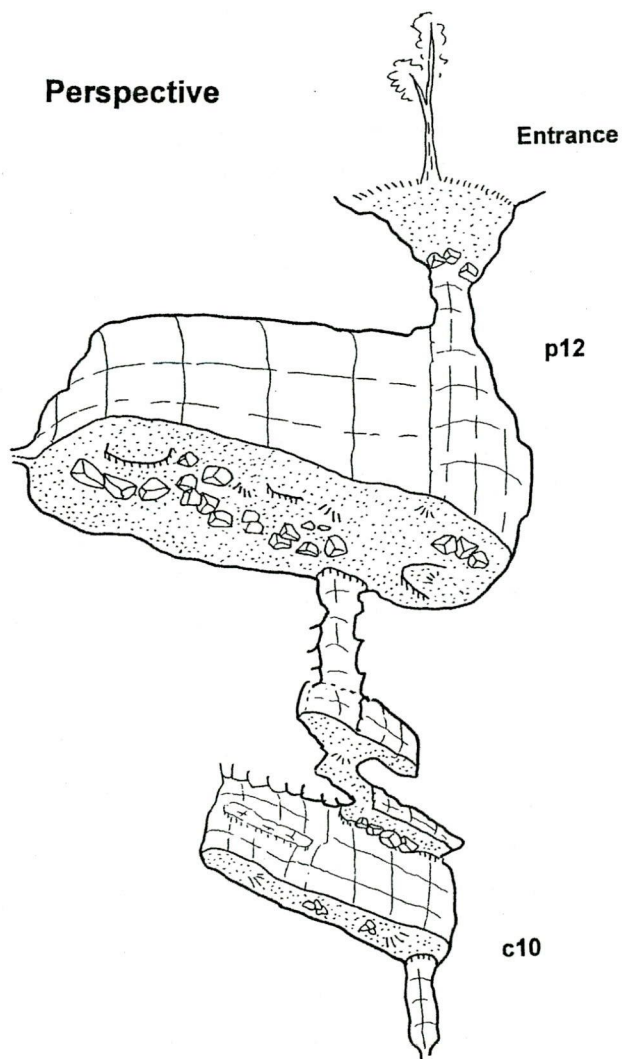
Meanwhile, Chris and I cleaned some of the mud off the flowstone on the right-hand side of the passage near the upstream breakdown. Mike and I had photographed some of the muddy tracks and handprints recently and were anxious to remove the mud before it was encrusted by calcite and the formations became permanently disfigured. Armed

with brushes and the recently repaired pump, we took turns pumping water and scrubbing and hosing off the formations. It is very satisfying work when the mud comes off, but not all of it did. We were too late on some of the formations and tread prints are now permanent.

It had been dry for the past several weeks. The recent rain from a few days ago probably never reached the mainstream because it would have turned the mainstream cloudy, but the mainstream was clear. The low water level of 0.64 makes us hopeful that the sumps will be open this year and we'll be able to have many survey trips past the upstream sumps.

When we headed over to the Flatlands on Sunday morning we thought we would just return the key and head home. We refused breakfast several times, but were finally overcome. With too many breakfasts like that, we'll never make it through the small passage to Mysterious Dome.

Perspective



Kambesis 2001

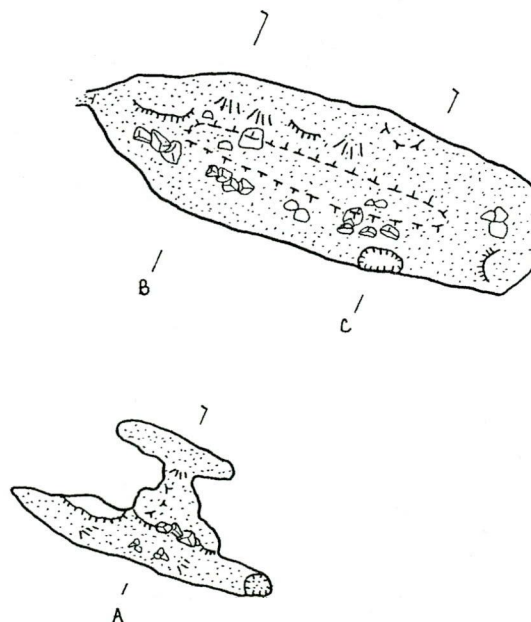
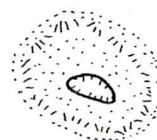
Nm



0 Feet 5

Plan

Entrance
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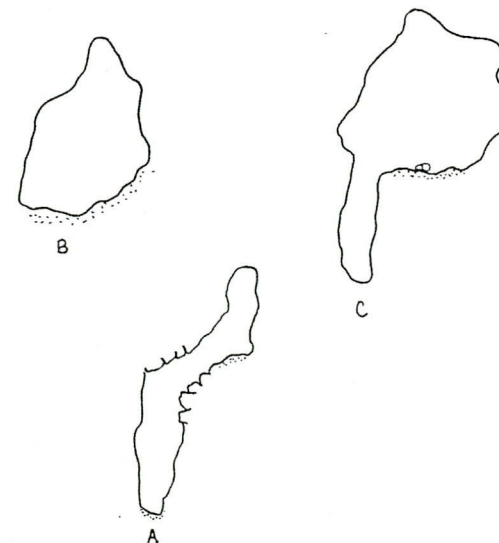
Floyd Cave Floyd County, Iowa

Suunto compass/inclinometer & tape survey

L. Burkhead, G. Engh, M. Lace,
P. Kambesis, E. Klausner,
P. Miller, B. Walstrom

November 2000

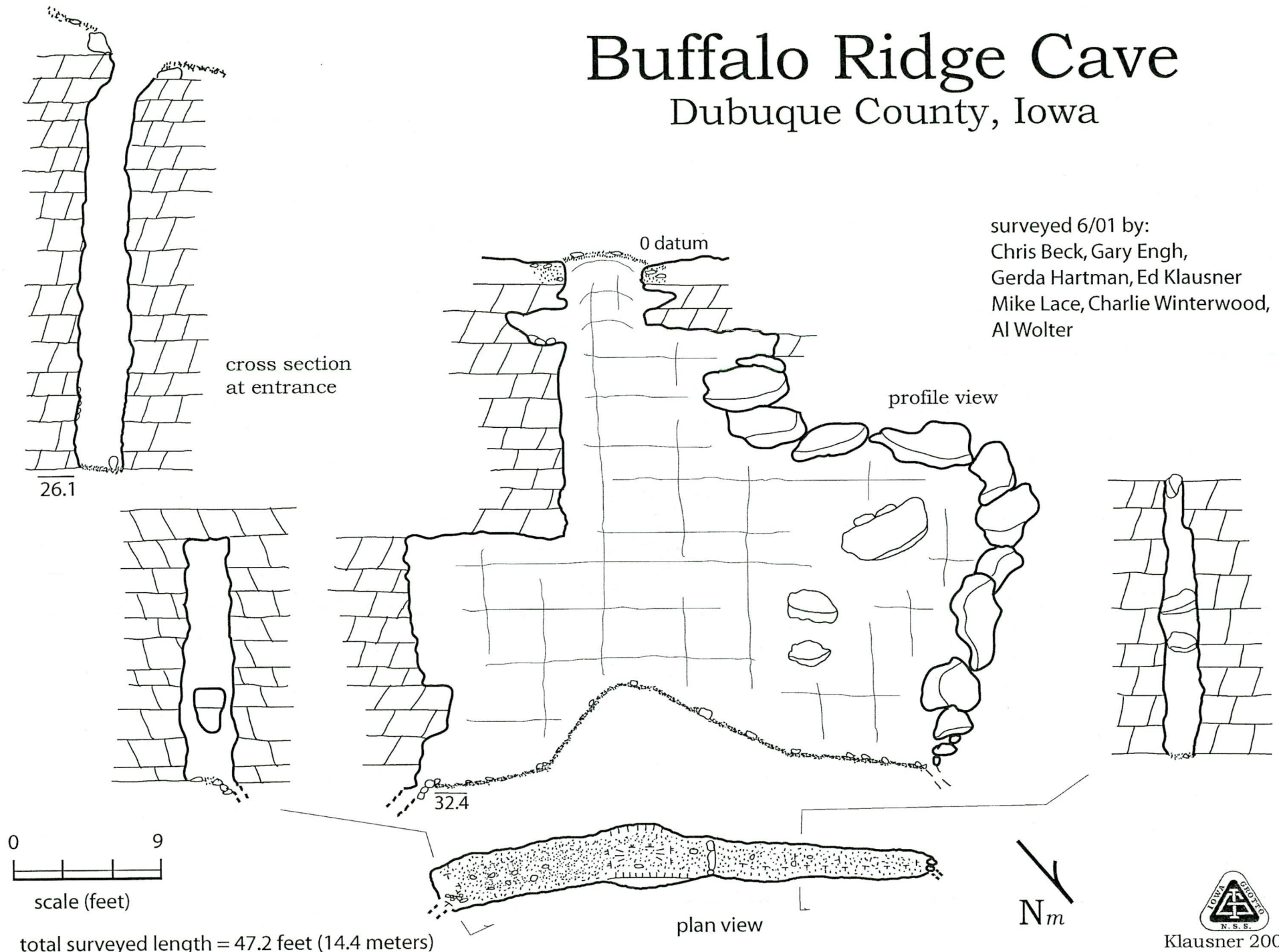
Total survey passage: 77 feet
Vertical Extent: 34 feet



Buffalo Ridge Cave

Dubuque County, Iowa

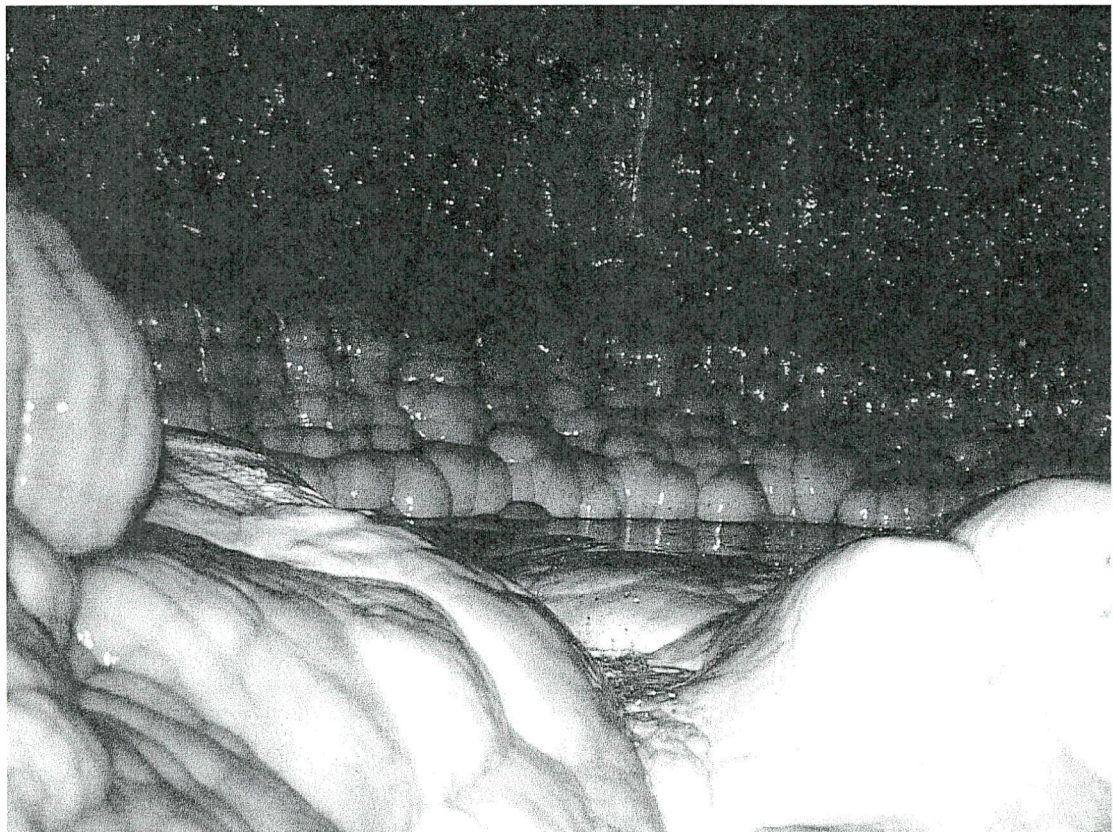
surveyed 6/01 by:
Chris Beck, Gary Engh,
Gerda Hartman, Ed Klausner
Mike Lace, Charlie Winterwood,
Al Wolter



Klausner 2001



Downstream side passage in Coldwater Cave Ia. Photo by Scott Dankof



Formations in Coldwater Cave Ia. Photo by Ed Klausner

