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## Intercom, Volume 37, No. 5, September-October 2001

Scott Dankof

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# INTERCOM

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**I N T E R C O M**

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September - October, 2001

**Iowa Grotto**

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Iowa City, IA 52244

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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:** Formation in Jewel Cave, South Dakota.  
Photo by Scott Dankof

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*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

September 26, 2001  
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 7:36 p.m. There were eight members present. Minutes from the August meeting were read and corrected. 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. TRIP REPORTS: Brad Smith and Liz Robinson reported on their trip to the O.T.R. where Simmons Mingo Cave was visited. Ed Klausner reported on the trip to Coldwater Cave where the 505 passage was visited with Larry Welch and John Lovaas. Mike Lace reported that Chris Beck and Elizabeth Miller did some restoration work the same weekend at Coldwater. Ed K. reported on trip to Jackson Co. with Gary Engh where four caves were surveyed. He then reported on another trip to Jackson Co. with Rich Feltes, Ryan Butler, Lowell Burkhead, Gary Engh and Phil LaRue. Phil LaRue reported on his trip to Searryl's cave and Doll cave with Jim Roberts. Lowell Burkhead reported on the trip to Floyd Co. where two caves were surveyed and a dig began. FUTURE TRIPS: See the September Hotline and N.S.S. News for details. OLD BUSINESS: Volume III of the Cave Map Book are available for \$25.00. Republished Intercom back issues are available. Contact Lowell B. for details. New Business: Intercom deadline is November 1st. A computer (486) has been donated to the Grotto library. Contact Elizabeth Miller on bat counts made while caving. Maquoketa Caves state Park: the ranger would like Grotto assistance with a gate for Tourist Delight cave. Officer nominations: Mike Lace, Lowell Burkhead and Phil LaRue were nominated to retain their current offices. Nominations will be taken until December's meeting. The November Grotto meeting is the fourth Wednesday this year. With no additional new business, the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m..

October 24, 2001  
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 7:30 p.m. There were ten members present. Minutes from the September meeting were read and corrected. A treasurer's report was given which showed balances of \$747.67 in the Coldwater fund; \$957.27 in the General fund; and \$103.70 in petty cash. TRIP REPORTS: Elizabeth Miller reported on her trip to Carstner's Cavern, Arizona,

to attend the Cave Management Symposium. Ed Klausner reported on the trip to Coldwater with Ryan Butler, Jim Roberts and Hanna Klausner, where waterfall passage and the entryway to the sumps were visited. He reported that Larry Welch and Mark Jones did some trenching in the area of the sumps to improve drainage. He then reported on a trip to Jackson and Jones counties with Gary Engh, Chris Beck and Mike Lace where one cave in each county was surveyed. He then reported on a trip to Winneshiek Co. with John Lovaas and Mike L. to dig at Lester's Spring and then survey one cave at Melanephy (sp) Spring. Liz Robinson and Brad Smith reported on the MVOR where Lone Onyx Cave and Onandaga (sp) Cave were visited. Mike L. reported on a trip to Jackson Co. with Gary E. where two caves surveyed. Greg McCarty reported on his trip with Deb where they visited a crevice cave at a quarry near Brush Creek Canyon. A trip was also made to Three Bridges Park in Marshall Co. where g.p.s. coordinates were taken at the small caves there. FUTURE TRIPS: See the October Hotline and N.S. S. News for details. The fall Geological Society of Iowa trip at Maquoketa Caves State Park is scheduled for 11-10-01. To be led by Mike Bounk. OLD BUSINESS: Volume III of the Cave Map Book are available for \$25.00. Republished Intercom back issues are available. Contact Phil LaRue for details. New Business: Intercom deadline is November 1st. Officer nominations for Chairman, Vice-chair and Secretary/ Treasurer will be taken until December's meeting. The November Grotto meeting is the fourth Wednesday this year. Elizabeth Miller reported that she attended sessions on bats and cave invertebrates at the Cave Management Symposium. She also has new information on bats, and cave and mine gating. The death of Grotto members, Lowell Burkhead and George Huppert were discussed. Lowell's memorial service is scheduled for 10-28-01. Lowell's family has been very generous to the Grotto in their donations to the Grotto Library. Lowell left the library in excellent shape, and it has been divided and placed in long term residence at the Klausner's and LaRue's homes. Scott Dankof, Intercom photo editor, has stepped in as the new editor. An issue of the Intercom is to be dedicated to Lowell. Please see the October Hotline for details and memorial contributions for George Huppert. The 2002 Grotto picnic was briefly discussed. with no additional new business, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m..

#### TRIP REPORTS

#### TRIP REPORTS

#### TRIP REPORTS

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### WHAT A FEAT TO WET YOUR FEET IN FIET CAVE

Fiet Cave, Allamakee County, Iowa  
August 5, 2001

by Lowell Burkhead

Mike Lace, Bill Mulder, Larry Welch, Andrew Welch, Lowell Burkhead, Arlene Burns, Richard Reth, Becky Reth, and Daniel Reth

This trip was one of the grotto picnic trips, led by Mike Lace. When we arrived at the cave, Mike Nelson was already there doing a dive in the sumped portion of the cave. This cave is a spring with a walk-in entrance. This time, we got to drive all the way to the entrance. It's in a beautiful setting feeding a pond. Everyone suited up and headed in.

Due to a minor drought, there was very little flow from the spring. The walking in the water at the entrance quickly turns to stoopwalking or duck-walking. I found this mode of locomotion to be particularly uncomfortable as did Arlene so we only saw the easy part. It goes in a fairly spacious manner for a couple hundred feet to a room where it ducks under the water as though it were two caves spliced together poorly. Mike Nelson caught up with us going out as he was having visibility problems because of the low flow.



## Old Timers Reunion

August 30-September 3

by Liz Robinson

Brad Smith and Liz Robinson and almost 2300 other people

Brad and I attended Old Timers Reunion this year. We came down a few days early to help with the work. Work included site preparations at the sauna--the usual stuff. We also took a run to Phillipi to pick up some plastic for the cool pool. The company that had provided the plastic for the Long House wet sauna had not provided the full 100 feet of plastic that had been ordered. The result was that we probably would not have the cool pool. I suggested that we call around to try to find another big piece. I was able to find it in a lumber yard and I went and got it. Brad went on a cave trip to Sharps Cave on Saturday. If you want a report on his trip you will have to get it from him. We both participated in the fun run. He won second in his age group and since I was the only one, I won first in my age group. We got nice certificates to take home. We got some speleodealer catalogues which we took time and we did some shopping on Vendors Row. We also participated in the 2002 Convention Planning meeting. Planning is coming along nicely and it should be a good convention. Brad will be submitting a wish list to the convention committee. We hope that they will be able to supply some of the equipment that we will need so that we will not have to haul it ourselves. I was in the DooDa parade with the Convention Planning Committee. We had a truck as the NSS Neversink passing out candy and with rubber bats on fishing poles. The other walked behind the truck with our lobster shirts on. Of course our lobster mascot was riding in the truck. He is the only uncooked red lobster you will ever meet.

During much of OTR I worked registration. Jobs included checking ID, TRA cards, providing nametags and entering data on the computers. Registration lasts round the clock once it opens on Thursday until the Friday night part, then days on Saturday and Sunday up until it closes for the year Sunday at 6pm. I have worked at registration for several years.

A new level of registrant was introduced this year. COOTS (Certified Original Old Timers normally have 20 OTRs: ROOTS (Real Original Old-timers) have 40 OTRs. All of the ROOTs were called up to the stage for introduction on Sunday night. Two were introduced in the guidebook. The guidebook has been changed this year. The outside activities, restaurants and caves are now in a separate "Field Guide."

There is a change in OTR rules for next year that everyone was warned about: The only people who will be admitted to the campground early will be those on the list of workers. Anyone who is not on the approved list will be turned away until noon on Thursday. This was the last year that anyone who arrived was admitted. Those who do arrive early will be given a list of local campgrounds and motels.

## SPEED-ENGH

Twicea Cave, Decorated Chamber Cave and numerous sinkholes, Floyd County, Iowa  
September 9, 2001  
Bob and Jim Wahlstrom, Lowell Burkhead, Greg McCarty, Mike Lace, Ryan Butler, Gary Engh, and Ed Klausner

It was one of those perfect days for caving except that it had rained the day before which left things a little wetter than normal. In our haste to get started, poor Gary was waylaid by the law on the open road! Ryan and I witnessed his capture as did Mike and Ed who were riding with him. We were lucky as we were going

considerably faster only two cars behind him. We were also running with considerably more stealth. Bob and Jim arrived ahead of us and set things up with the owner and renter.

Upon arriving at the first cave, we split into two groups. Mike, Ed, Gary, and Ryan started surveying Twicea Cave and the rest of us headed toward the back of the pasture checking sinkholes as we went. Greg found a good dig at the very back of the field and had at it. I went back and helped the survey crew get started at Decorated Chamber Cave. It had to be reopened. Much of the rubble that had been dug out of it last year had washed back in.

Three hundred pounds of rock later, the survey started. I headed to the bottom drain and started pulling out the plug of sticks and rubble. After several people had had a turn at it, it was decided to do a dig there. I went back to my car and got my digging tools and passed them into the cave. By then it was lunchtime so I ate and then went back to where Greg was digging along with Bob and Jim. I climbed down and had a look in. It has a huge echo.

By the time I got back to Decorated Chamber Cave, the surveying was adding the dig to the map. It wasn't much to add. The terminal crawl and drain is blocked by some rather large rocks that are not removable. The passage continues but you can't see how far. It apparently drains freely as the chamber didn't look like it flooded. I reported to the surveying crew and diggers about Greg's dig but I was a little over optimistic about its chances. After abandoning the dig at Decorated Chamber, we all headed back to where the other dig was underway.

Most everyone went down and had a look and some took a turn at digging. Many other sinkholes were checked while the digging was done. All the wood and loose rocks were removed and then a lot of the dirt. It was found that a rock on the floor that was blocking the way was actually bedrock. There was a lot of banging on that but not a lot of it gave way. By the time we had pooped out, only Greg, Ryan and I were left and it was raining. We all vowed to return and open this portal to the Hollow Earth.

#### AKA BOOTLEGGER CAVE

Meridian Cave, Unexpected Cave, Discriminating Cave, Air Cave, Jackson County, Iowa  
August 26, 2001 by Ed Klausner  
Bill Brown, Lowell Burkhead, Ryan Butler, Gary Engh, Rich Feltes, Ed Klausner, and Phil LaRue

Bootlegger Cave was known to be across the Maquoketa River from the only easy access. Several of us had tried to cross earlier in the year, but the water was too deep and we had to turn back. It has been dry lately, so we planned on a survey trip plus a little ridgewalking in late August. Of course, it rained several inches just before our trip, but we thought we'd try it anyway. The water was muddy from the recent rain, but we were still able to get across.

Mike Lace had ridgewalked this area in 1997 as far as Meridian Cave, which he mapped. We planned on finding Bootlegger and then going as far downstream as Meridian to see if there were any caves in between. I took along a copy of the Meridian Cave map so we would know when we found it. It turned out that Bootlegger Cave was Meridian Cave, so we had one less cave to survey and knew we hit the downstream limit of our ridgewalking for the day. Rich and Phil dug on a small cave that was mostly sediment filled, but there was some air movement. They got 10 feet in before the walls were too close together to continue.

In the meantime, we split up and ridgewalked upstream. Several of us independently found Unexpected Cave. We originally decided on Surprise Cave, but later found the name had already been used. The cave was a surprise because it was



only 16.5 feet long, but had stalactites, flowstone, and a stalagmite in the back of this short cave. This was the first one surveyed for the day.

Next was a mechanical cave that proved to be difficult for some of the group, hence the name, Discriminating Cave. After 8 to 10 feet, the bedrock floor was only 7 inches from the ceiling. Ryan and I were the only two who fit, although Phil did some digging to get the entrance area more accessible. Fortunately, we were able to get one 18 foot survey shot. The cave continued, but it would have been very difficult to advance as there was a 3 foot drop and the cave became narrow after the last station. It would have been difficult to back out if you didn't become wedged in the passage. At least we were able to add the survey to our yearly total.

One more cave was found, but unfortunately, not surveyed. Lowell named the cave Air Cave because all you would see would be air if you were at the back of the cave looking out. The cave entrance is a large shelter, approximately 25 feet high and about as wide. The floor sloped steeply up to the ceiling and we couldn't reach this high area without vertical gear. We were forced to put off the survey until another day.

We continued upstream to the property line without finding any additional caves. Even though it was August and the leaves were still on the trees and bushes, the cliff face was still quite visible and we felt we'd covered the area.

#### LOWER SALTS

Salts Cave, Mammoth System, Kentucky

September 1, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Ed Klausner, Maggie Osburn, Terri Ruskin, and Mick Sutton

I had heard quite a bit about Salts Cave from Gary Engh, Mike Lace and my wife, Elizabeth, so I requested to go on a Salts trip during the CRF Labor Day expedition. Luckily, Mick Sutton, the cartographer for this section of cave, was leading a trip that at least passed through Upper Salts. Upper Salts contains artifacts of visitors ranging from 4,000 years ago through 2,000 years ago, plus evidence of explorers and looters in the 1900's.

After the requisite problems with the lock, we finally got it off and were in Upper Salts. We had a bit of extra time sitting around while Maggy found enough parts on her two carbide lamps to get one of them to work (well, sort of work). This gave me an opportunity to look closely under ledges and in cracks where I found bits of reed torches and what I understand is one of the most valuable items left behind by the earlier visitors: paleo feces. Floyd Collins and many others removed artifacts from Salts Cave to sell to tourists, museums and collectors. These items included reed torches, gourds, and sandals. Evidently, there was no market for dried feces, so they remained in the cave. They later provided researchers a method of determining the diet of these early explorers and miners. One of the reasons the cave was entered by Native Americans was to remove the minerals. The difference between visited areas and non-visited areas is striking in that the visited areas were stripped of their minerals and had torch marks on the ceiling and walls. Non-visited areas can be quite striking with the walls and ceilings covered with formations.

The trunk passage in upper Salts was huge and is some of the largest in the Mammoth System. In Upper Salts we also saw evidence of later explorers. Ellis Jones, a guide from the 1930's (?) left his signature in several spots. We also saw "JL" (Jack Lehrberger) who discovered the lower levels of Salts Cave, much of Unknown Cave and was one of the connection team of Crystal Cave and Unknown Cave on Flint Ridge.

Our stay in Upper Salts was short as we dropped through The Incredible Salts Dig into Lower Salts. The dig was relatively recent and took us to areas not mined by early Americans. The trip down was relatively easy, but it was not as easy getting up almost 12 hours later. Lower Salts was wetter than Upper Salts and quite nicely decorated. At one spot, Mick took us on a slight detour to show us some troglobitic flatworms. There are two species in the cave. Neither are known to coexist in the same pool. We did quite a bit of canyon hopping and climbing to reach our destination, a complicated breakdown area.

Mick sketched the plan view while I sketched profile and cross sections. We got several shots into this virgin area before we could no longer get through. There was another passage that extended over the ceiling of the breakdown room we had just surveyed.

After a snack, we headed back the way we came so we could resurvey the top of a canyon passage. I don't know when the original survey was done. Cross sections and profile views were difficult as the floor was about 40 feet below and not usually visible.

The trip out was slow as the climbs did not have good hand and foot holds. Mick pointed out landmarks for us on the way in. Maggie, Terri and I were new to Salts, so the three of us tried to find our way out of this mazy cave. As it was late. Mick did not let us go the wrong way very long before he asked if it looked familiar to us. This was a sure sign that it shouldn't, as we took a wrong turn.

Fortunately, we had no trouble with the lock on our way out. Once we reached the road, we used just the moonlight to walk back the short distance from Salts to the new CRF facility in Hamilton Valley.

#### DAVID'S GOLIATH

David's Goliath Cave, Doyle Valley, Kentucky  
September 2, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Bill Baus, Dawn Cardace, Ed Klausner, and Jason Kulba

David's Goliath was first surveyed in the early 1980's by the Cave Research Foundation. It was not sketched to scale, a profile view was not drawn, few cross sections were drawn and most shots did not include clinometer readings as was common for that time. As part of the Small Caves Project in Mammoth Cave National Park, David's Goliath needed to be resurveyed. The upper level was resurveyed in February of 2001. Four of us set off during the second day of the Labor Day expedition to survey the lower level. The hardest part proved to be finding the cave. The opening is a 1 foot by 2 foot hole in the level ground with no good landmarks nearby. We knew the approximate location and passed within a few feet of it several times before finally locating it.

The easiest way down seemed to be by rope, so we rigged to a nearby tree and easily reached the upper level, about 30 feet down. There was a tie-in station on this level, so Bill and I stayed here while Dawn and Jason continued to the bottom, a little over 60 feet from the entrance. Dawn and Jason did not have their vertical gear along with them, so we had to do some gear exchange.

The first high angle shot from the upper level to the lower level proved difficult and Bill had to repeat it several times. We could not take a plumb shot. Agreement between fore and back sights was sometimes 10 to 20 degrees. This gave me time to sketch the plan of the lower room and draw a profile. Dawn, meanwhile, sketched the cross section. Dawn learned to sketch in Wind Cave and knew Iowa Grotto member Marc Ohms.

Once the high angle shot was taken, the pace picked up and we finished surveying one of the three passages that came off the main room. This passage was



very nicely decorated. There was a Big Eared Bat on the wall and I got a good look at it before it had enough of me and flew off. The ears seemed to be about half its body length. Also in the cave were two toads and a salamander. The toads probably fell in and were quite attracted to my pack as they both sat on it and remained there for hours. I gave them a ride out when we exited.

Due to the fact that we only signed out until 9 PM and that we had to share ascending gear, we could only survey one of the passages on the lower level. The other passages look to also be nicely decorated, so a return trip should be very pleasant.

I ascended first and took off my gear. I then pulled up the rope while the rest of the crew held on to the end. When I got the point that they were out of rope, I tied a loop in the rope and clipped my gear on. They were thus able to pull the rope and gear down without it hanging up on a ledge. Dawn was familiar with a frog system and was up quickly. Jason was given a quick lesson by Bill and he, too, was up quickly. There are lots of reasons not to share gear, etc. etc., but it was either do that or abandon the trip.

We found our way back to the road in the dark by following a compass bearing and noting the number of steps so we could more easily refind the cave. I hope the next trip is in the winter to avoid the ticks and chiggers that seemed quite attracted to us.

#### CLASSIC LARRY

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa  
September 15, 2001  
Ed Klausner, John Lovaas and Larry Welch

by Ed Klausner

Larry Welch has a reputation of going on trips that many others consider somewhat less than desirable. They are often to hideous passages with a net gain of a few feet of survey, if that. When Larry tries to assemble a crew before a trip, some cavers seem to loose their hearing. Somehow, I was up for a trip to Sand Canyon as I haven't been there and didn't know better, but that was an 8 hour round trip and I had to be out after 7 hours because of family commitments. Since my wife, Elizabeth, was going on a restoration trip elsewhere in the cave, I couldn't come up with any phoney excuses as to why I was late.

Surveying the other side of what Larry thought was The 501 Passage seemed like a good possibility, so Larry and I started packing our gear. The 501 Passage near Zipper Dome is thought to connect to a side passage of The 505 on the other side of The Johnson Press. The 501 was surveyed up to some formations which blocked further progress. Our goal was to start at the upstream end of the supposed 501 and survey to those formations, about 200 to 250 feet.

John Lovaas arrived at the Coldwater cabin while Larry and I were packing gear and decided to join us. The water level was quite low, 0.58, and was quite clear all the way upstream to the bottom of Pete's Pipe. CO2 levels seemed to be relatively low and we did not find ourselves panting. We found one interesting item on the long stoopwalk/crawl up The Pipe; a rock that fluoresced blue when our LED lights illuminated it. When we shined halogen lights on it, it did not appear to be blue. Perhaps there were some bacteria or other organisms causing it.

The Johnson Press wasn't bad with the low water level. We only had the side of our faces in the water for 20 feet or so. The 505 Passage takes off to the right just after the 400 feet of The Johnson Press. The 505 is easy to get through as you can body surf over the slick mud and the passage is nicely decorated. The supposed

501 is the right fork of a "Y" junction. Keeping the book, tape and instruments clean was out of the question - keeping them functional was all we could hope for. John was lead tape, I read instrument and Larry did book. We got down 50 feet of what Larry thought was virgin passage in shots that seemed to average about 10 feet. The passage was never very big to begin with, but was getting smaller. John continued down the passage thinking the passage was big enough to turn around in just ahead, but when he reached that spot, he realized that the dimensions were really the size of his helmet and he got stuck. It wasn't serious although it took him some time to extricate himself from the thick, sticky mud in a very narrow tube where everything seemed to be in the wrong position for him to back out of the passage. We all had to back out to the junction of The 505.

There was one more shot left to do in The 505 and Larry was tempted to try to get it. He thought the shot would require clean instruments and tape and perhaps some smaller people. It didn't take me long to figure out that this was going to be nasty. We packed up gear, but Larry thought he would have a look. He is now scheming on how to best take this shot and I see an unpleasant trip in someone's future.

The trip out was uneventful. The Johnson Press seemed roomy after The 501. While we were surveying, Chris Beck and Elizabeth Miller were doing some restoration work between the shaft and the upstream breakdown, and cutting and stacking firewood with Mike Lace near the cabin.

#### CANOEING TO THE CAVE

Upyr Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa  
October 29, 1994  
Lowell Burkhead and Greg McCarty

by Greg McCarty

Before the cold weather set in I wanted to check the new lead that Deb and I had found earlier this month near Malanaphy Spring. The second visit had changed the plan of attack some and made it seem like a much easier task. Plus I was able to get some of the work done in the short time Deb and I were at the hole. Since Lowell had done some work on a couple of other leads in the Malanaphy Spring area in the past I thought he would be interested in helping me check this one. It is an overflow for Malanaphy Spring that is blocked by large rocks coming out of a ceiling crevice about ten feet from the entrance. It appeared that the crevice was passable if you could clear the way into it. I originally thought we would have to bust our way through or around a huge block that had slipped down, but the second trip Deb and I made to it showed that the way on actually was to the right of the block and up. I still thought that using a canoe to get the tools the long distance up to the overflow would be good, but Lowell suggested we attack from downstream rather than upstream. I had never canoed upstream, but Lowell assured me we could do it so we set up the trip.

Lowell picked me up in Fayette and we proceeded up to Malanaphy Springs Preserve. After tying our gear into the canoe we set off upstream. At first it was a cinch. The water was slow and deep and we made excellent progress. Eventually, though, we hit faster water. It was shallow and rocky so we had a little trouble paddling. We took a rest break at a snag, but soon had to leave due to a couple of rotting animals. When we reached some serious rapids we were uncertain what to do. Furious paddling and poling took us across the current into some quiet water behind a huge snag. After resting we angled across again and grabbed the overhanging grass. Using it as hand holds we pulled our way through the rapids. A long stretch of difficult paddling finally got us to an island. It was too fast and shallow to paddle past either side so we walked the canoe along the bank and through the snags. After taking the opportunity to rest, and collect a few thousand burrs in our wool pants, we struggled to get the canoe into enough water to float with us in it and then resumed our journey.



We finally passed Malanaphy Spring and I knew the take-out point was approaching. We were tired from the long struggle and the water was getting faster and choppy. The place we needed to be was in the middle of a difficult set of rapids. As we fought against the current it got more and more grim. Poling was the only thing we could do and the rough water constantly tried to turn us aside. At one point we were starting to lose control of the front end. I had managed to pull it out before in the rapids downstream, but this time when I planted the paddle for the last ditch effort I hit a rock just under the surface of the water. There was no chance now! We turned sideways and promptly flipped the canoe. I popped back up and grabbed the canoe. When I turned to check on Lowell he saw I had the canoe and took off downstream to grab his hat. I walked the filled canoe over to the bank and started tipping out the water. When it would float again we took out the gear and drained it. Lowell hadn't tied down a large hammer but it was still in the canoe. We hadn't lost a thing, but we now were completely soaked. It was a nice fall day, but still fall. We had gotten a late start and Lowell was concerned that the coming dusk would chill him. We wrung out our shirts and jackets and had some lunch while we talked over the situation. Lowell's coveralls and gear were soaked because his pack leaked. He wasn't feeling up to doing much in the way of lead checking. I hated to see all the time and effort we had already invested go to waste when we were so close to the cave. I finally convinced Lowell that we should climb up to the cave and work for a while.

We towed the canoe upstream to where there was a ravine coming down to the river and beached it. The ravine provided a climbable route up to the area of the cave. Perhaps not as easy a route as it first looked, though. After climbing up the side of a little dry waterfall I stepped on a log that formed part of the lip at the top. With my arms full of caving gear and digging tools I was struggling a little and tried to cheat a bit on the foot plant by not bothering to check it first. It was like grease! I immediately flipped over backwards and landed on my back amongst a pile of rocks about four and a half feet down. I thought it was hilarious! A couple of bruises and a skinned elbow were the only damages, but the way my feet whipped out from under me sending me to my doom really struck me as funny. I must remember to be more careful until I get my conditioning and coordination back to where it should be.

After I stopped laughing I re climbed the waterfall and joined Lowell. When we reached the overflow I climbed up into it and began passing back the rocks I had pulled loose the previous trip so Lowell could throw them down the wash. I soon found out that the raccoons who frequent the cave objected to my previous digging. The hole I had dug for my head so I could look up into the crevice now had a huge pile of raccoon dung in it. Hard to believe it could have accumulated that much in only two weeks. Not having the proper implements with me (they were in the canoe) I had to push it onto flat rocks and pass it back to Lowell. Once that shit was out of the way I continued the enlarging process so there was room to work on the big rocks. It turned out there were three rocks that needed to be removed. Once I had enough room to do the job I had to be careful not to get bashed by them. I had to lay on my back in a belly crawl and reach up into the crevice and rotate the rocks with a crowbar so that they would drop down to my level. I certainly didn't want one in the face. I've had to do this before, though, so eventually I got two of them out and rolled them out to the entrance. The third one was extremely stubborn and would move but not drop.

I was getting a better view up into the crevice all the time and it was certainly looking passable, maybe four feet high and ten inches wide. It trended perpendicular to the crawlway (going right) and then started to curve back to the left. I managed to squeeze up into the crevice part way, but couldn't make the curve out of the crawl yet. I dug it out larger and passed more stuff out to Lowell. About this time Lowell heard voices coming from the direction of the canoe. He climbed back down to within sight of it and found it was just voices of hikers



carrying up the valley from the spring. I tried once more to fit into the crevice and decided I had to get rid of the last rock. I yelled down to Lowell to tell him my plan and how many minutes I would be out of contact. If I didn't get back to him he was to assume the rock had mashed me and climb back up to check. He was too weak to come back up if he didn't have to. Fortunately I was able to sit up beside the rock in the crevice now and was strong enough in that position to rotate the rock and start it out of the crevice. As I wriggled back down into the crawlway on my back I controlled the rock above my head with my hands. When my face was out of the way, finally, I let it crash down beside me. It was tough to rock and roll it out of the cave, but this was the key to getting in. The cave should now be open!

After enlarging a little more I made one last push and found that the cave was indeed open, but only for someone a little smaller than me. The crevice proved to be a bit snug at my current size (bloated). I needed to remove a rock point and to dig out some more rocks and dung that were underneath the last big rock. Then I think I can just barely fit. We didn't have time for it on this trip, though. Lowell was chilling and darkness was setting in, it was time to head back. It was completely dark by the time we launched the canoe so I provided the light and Lowell did the steering. With the fast water we did the over one mile float in no time. The rapids and snags gave us no trouble. Once we reached the take-out point we drug the canoe and gear most of the way to the car on the wood chips before the steep trail got the better of us and we had to haul some gear. We didn't get as much done as we hoped on this trip, but then again the cave is almost opened up and ready to go. Next time, though, we'll walk in.

#### TATTOO CAVE

April Cave, Lester's Spring Cave, and Tattoo Cave,  
by Ed Klausner  
28, 29 September, 2001  
Ed Klausner, Mike Lace and John Lovaas

Winneshiek County, IA

The JFI passage of April Cave has never been fully surveyed and has been on our list of things to do for a few years. Even though it had rained three inches in the area the previous weekend, the late summer and fall had been dry and the last few days had also been dry. Mike and I decided to drive up on Friday evening so we could get an early start on Saturday morning. John and possibly Chris Beck and Larry Welch were to meet us on Saturday morning.

Friday night was clear and after setting up camp, we walked down the hill to April Cave to see the water level. The new, wet sediment deposited several inches above the water level and water marks on the wall indicated the level had been higher very recently. The cave, however, was enterable.

The next morning presented us with a problem. It was quite overcast and looked as if it could rain. With the ground saturated, we didn't want to take any chances of being trapped in April if it rained while we were in there. The beginning of the survey in the JFI passage is about three hours from the entrance and we couldn't be out in time if we noticed any change in water level while in the cave.

When John arrived, we decided to do some work on Lester's Spring instead. The water was high enough that we couldn't see into the cave. We spent a few hours removing rocks and trenching in the streambed. We successfully lowered the water level a few inches and John, who was wearing a wet suit bottom, could slip a body's length into the cave. He could see the mud bank that was visible about two years



ago, but could not get further in. We will have to continue trenching, but this time, we will have to be wearing wet suits to work while in the stream.

Next stop was a small cave described by Lowell Burkhead and Greg McCarty. They had found the cave and done some rock removal several years ago. We found the cave based on their description. It started off as a low crawl for about 9 feet to a narrow crack that is perpendicular to the entrance passage. It is choked to left, but is technically walking passage to the right. You can stand up, but it is quite narrow so turning your head is not much of an option and there is a wedged piece of breakdown that would make walking impossible. The only way to continue is on your side. After about 20 feet, the passage turns sharply to the left and becomes too narrow. We surveyed the cave and named it Tattoo Cave in honor of a waitress in Decorah.

#### NO BULL

No Bull Cave, Jones County and Marginal Cave, Jackson County IA by Ed Klausner  
13 October, 2001  
Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Ed Klausner, and Mike Lace

Saturday seemed like the day to get out this weekend as the chance of rain was the smallest. We went out on Saturday, but had to change plans several times during the day because it was pouring (Sunday turned out to be sunny). The first stop turned out to be one that was not on our list for the day. On the way to meet a landowner we passed an inviting valley with exposed rock in Jones County. Once we determined that the landowner we were to meet was not around, we located the landowner of the valley and got permission to ridgewalk. The owner assured us that there were no bulls in the valley and it was the best name we could come up with for the only cave we found. It was close to 50 feet long with several small openings along with a walk in main entrance.

The next stop was supposed to also be in Jones County to map two caves we had found a year or so ago, but never mapped. They were far from the road and it was raining harder and harder. We got permission from the landowner to go any time we were in the area and decided to put it off for another day. Since the rain didn't look as if it was letting up, Chris headed back to Illinois.

Next stop was at a farm in Jackson County where the landowners weren't home a few weeks ago, but had a reported crawl in cave on their land. Best of all, it was reported to be near their house. Unfortunately, they weren't home. We did some truck caving - just driving around looking for exposed rock on roads we hadn't been down before. The rain was letting up as we passed a farm that had been on Mike's list for a few years. The owner had quite a bit of land with exposed rock; too much to walk in one day. We chose the rock close to the house and the quarry across the road. Unfortunately, all we could find was one small cave - Marginal Cave. We'll go back to finish that area when we get a chance. The leaves are starting to fall and ridgewalking was not as much of a problem as a few weeks ago.

#### Skunk Cave Rescue Winnishiek County, Iowa October 6, 2001

By Warren Netherton, Forestville/Mystery Cave Park  
I wrote this to give a description of what occurred and also as a tool to learn by. An analysis of what went right or wrong is at the end. My opinions, others may

disagree. I really don't know what happened before arriving there. I only saw the situation as it existed at around 8pm. onward. It was a real team effort by the Iowa Grotto, Minnesota Speleological Survey, and local EMS personnel. There were 12 cavers on site.

On Saturday, October 6, I got a call around 6:30 pm from the Cresco Fire Chief, Vince Hornberger that a sixteen year old male was stuck in a cave near Kendallville, IA. I subsequently called Chris Ingebretsen and Mark White to get ready and leave ASAP. Next a call to the Sheriff's office to get any cavers at Spring Valley Caverns. When we arrived at the cave several dozen emergency personnel were there. Iowa Grotto folks were in the cave. We checked in and waited about ten minutes until I got the go ahead to enter from Mike Nelson who emerged covered in mud. I requested Mark come along. Request granted.

The entrance is across a ditch and up a slope about 20 feet. The cave is a series of enlarged joints in the Stewartville (Wise Lake) Formation. The few passages I saw were quite similar to what is in lower level Mystery; widths of a couple feet or less, ceiling heights varying from 2 to 15 feet or more. There are a couple easy climb downs to the mucky, mud floor. A constriction about 100 feet inside was too narrow for Doug Schmuecker whom I met there and to my knowledge, all but two of the firemen whom had been in previously. Going through the constriction is like crawling through a hog wallow, liquid mud. A good part of you gets immersed. The boy, Andy, was stuck beyond this constriction about a hundred feet further in.

Mike Lace, Chris Beck, and Ed Klausner were on the scene. So was the boy's father. Flashlight cavers, no hardhats, and as far as I could tell, no knee or elbow pads. The boy was wedged in a crevice that joined the main passage at a T. The ceiling height at the T was something like 12 or 15 feet. The mud floor at the T sloped up into the crevice, rising around six to eight feet. The boy was wedged in the crevice sideways, with his head end towards the T. At the time I arrived, his feet were about two feet higher than his head. There was no way someone my size could fit underneath him. The crevice is a gradual wedge shape with the wider portion near the top. His head could be reached from the T. There was another passage from the main one that led to his feet. Someone had placed a 2 X 4 underneath him that extended out into the T. This turned out to be both his salvation and detriment later. He was in agony-- moaning, screaming, and whining when I got to him. His lower shoulder was giving him a lot of grief. Mike Nelson had been supporting him by reaching down and pulling up on it. My arms weren't long enough to do that. I made an assessment, tried to help him in a few ways, tried a few initial things to see what he could move. All this time, either Chris Beck or Ed Klausner were at his feet, keeping them warm and supported. He had been in that position against the rock since 11am. It was well after 8 pm now. The towels and blankets on top were definitely making a difference.

I hopped down and wanted Mark to take a look at the situation. Everyone else there already had and knew what we were dealing with. While he was up, I took a good look at the walls. This kid was really stuck. Man was he stuck. Mark descended to the floor, we conferred briefly, I climbed back up. It was clear things had to start happening fast, they had to, hypothermia was looming.

I spent most of the next three hours wedged in the top of the crevice with the boy. Chris B. or Ed alternated on the foot end and things did start happening-- a power cord was brought in, a hammer drill arrived, boards were brought in, hot packs, a refill of the hot water bottle, a wool blanket, a space blanket, a



platform was built. The flight nurse from Mayo arrived, followed by a doctor. He ordered hot packs for the groin and armpits. Easier said than done.

One end of a two by six was pushed up and in the mud slope underneath him. Then the other side was raised to about horizontal. This helped offer Andy some support. A two by four was positioned vertically under the free end of the two by six to hold it. This became an important work platform and something to slide him forward on.

I tried several things and worked on the kid's psyche simultaneously. Constant talk, "This is what we're going to do, try this, now we're doing this instead, move here, close your eyes I'm covering your face, how's this feel, cave experts here, this is looking good, push with your toes, over there, good progress, rest now, close your eyes, pull here, grab my hand, do this, move your butt, push again, lift your foot, now push, stop, rest." Things worked. He went from whining and bouts of anger and pain, jammed in the crack like a helpless blob, to cooperation and understanding that he was a part of helping himself get out, and working on it. I felt I had a pretty good grasp of what was hurting too much and when to stop pulling. I could grab his upper arm and pull while he pushed with his feet, which he could move at his ankles and toes. Ed or Chris, depending on which one was there, provided a platform of hands or his head for Andy to push against with his feet. Nothing moved. I stretched in further and tugged his Levi's at the waist. Again on three. "HEY ALL RIGHT! That's the way!" Movement. It was a huge morale booster. The foot movement was critical. He was propelling himself, even though it was the speed of a paramecium, progress none-the-less. Thus it went. Constant dialog and alternately trying to move different parts of him forward: arm, waist, arm, waist, arm waist, three millimeters at a time, sometimes less. But he was moving and could feel it. His chest was compressed for a while and made for shallow breathing, however, that may have just been an extra squeeze, cause he was really jammed in and probably couldn't have gotten deep breaths most of the time anyway. Practically all of the time, someone was holding a leg of mine so I had something to hold against and wedge while pulling. Chris Beck or Ed, whichever one was positioned at his feet at the time, was in what looked like a miserably uncomfortable position for the duration of these ordeals. On the count of three he'd brace, I'd pull, and Andy tried to move a foot. I pushed the boy as much as I dared. When he wore out, that would be the end of this method. Over time, progress was made though, and the situation changed. It looked like we'd come 12 to 18 inches forward. A huge benefit of this forward progress was that his feet, which were resting on the mud floor, had dropped down into the crevice and further down the mud slope. The result was that his body was oriented close to horizontal now, as opposed to his butt being higher than his head. There was still about seven feet further to go, but he'd only be wedged in that for a short distance if we could get him past these tight areas.

The last couple times I pulled, an iron grip was clamped to my wedging leg to hold me in place; John Ackerman had arrived. It was time for me to move out and let John assess the rock and situation. This turned out to be just the right combination of changes for the rescue because, once the boy was done in, we had to start moving on another front, which would be drilling, blasting, or wedging.

It was time to start moving any gear John needed inside, get the father outside, and get more cavers, if there were any, in the cave. I went back down the passage with the flight nurse, out of earshot of the boy and father, to get her opinion on how long until Andy would be exhausted.

"I need your best estimate."

She was thinking out loud, considering. .... "That depends on a lot of things" "Best guess....."

"Two hours." Moments later, loud voices down the passage.

Mark wanted to take a 2 x 4 out from underneath the boy since we arrived. I objected. It was giving support to his torso and possibly keeping him from dropping lower and possibly wedging worse. I agreed that the crevice may have a little more width lower down, but we couldn't have him wedged any length of time with his head low and feet high, not in the condition he was in when we arrived. The board had been put there earlier during the rescue, prior to our arrival. It was also part of what he was sliding (creeping) forward on. By pulling him forward, the situation had changed. Now, with me physically out of the way, John and Mark saw another pulling approach could be used. They pulled out the 2 x 4 and he either slid down further or it gave him more room, or both. They dragged him out. That is all I know. There may have been more to it, but it didn't take very long, maybe ten minutes. Later, all of us talked about aspects of the rescue, but I didn't get the exact story on the final moments. It was wonderful though.... success! Kelly, the nurse, did a cursory check and pronounced him okay to move. John escorted him out under his own power.

Then Mark and I escorted the father to firefighters near the entrance. He seemed in worse shape than his son. One leg was partially paralyzed, a condition that was exacerbated by being in the cave. We pointed out footholds, handholds, and gave an occasional pull from me and push/lift from Mark. Close to the entrance, we met Larry Welch coming in. He offered additional assistance with his typical exuberance.

Next demobilization. Cavers lined up along the route. Phil LaRue was next to me; he had been in Tipton, IA goose hunting when he got word to come. Dave Gerboth and Chris Ingebretsen were both on the line. Chris Beck, Ed, John, Mike, and Mark were further inside picking up items and sending them out.

A surprising amount of gear was back in there. Electrical cord, the drill, bits, rope, hot packs, water bottles, hot water bottles, blankets, towels, hydraulic pump, 2 x 4s, 4 x4s, 2 x 6s, 2 x 8's, more and more gear. It would have taken two people hours to deal with all this stuff. With this team, maybe 20 or 30 minutes. I wrestled an impossibly fat bag of something or other over to Phil, much to the amusement of John. Things were fun now. This was a caving trip among old friends and new acquaintances. In a matter of minutes, the situation went from dead serious to relief. Everyone exited. All the gear that had been in use was arranged outside on the ground. The firemen invited us all to the fire hall in Cresco. We cleaned up a little bit there, ate some pizza, and had a debriefing. Finality.

#### Comments.

There were a whole lot of things that went right on this rescue, some by chance and a lot because of good cooperation and decisions. There were mistakes too, but not too bad. I certainly learned some things.

Directions. Fire chief Vince Hornberger on the phone provided excellent directions. Once in the area, directions to the cave were good. We knew where to go.

Dialog. Talking with the boy helped tremendously. It gave him encouragement, got his mind to productive thoughts, helped me in assessing his condition, and prepared him to work with us. It was a lot of talking and constantly playing with his mind, but it worked big time. For example, he didn't understand that we were taking him out headfirst towards the T. Prior to this, he thought we were going to take him out feet first. Every negative comment he made was twisted back into something positive by me. The encouragement Chris B., Ed, and I gave clearly



worked as did the comments from people behind me. It was obvious in his demeanor and I could feel it in his grip. When I encountered Mike Lace near the constriction, he gave me a short, but valuable briefing and included the comment that Andy had no concept of the time. It was a good reminder and an important one.

Command structure. I didn't know who the incident commander was. A huge mistake on my part considering I was directing the underground extrication/evacuation. I don't know that it affected anything adversely, but I should have known that Doug Schmuecker was orchestrating plans on the surface to sustain the efforts underground. Being a caver, professional rescue ems person, and too large to get past the constriction, he was well suited to the job.

Electric cord. A heavy electric cable was run from a generator outside to the rescue site in the cave, however the outlet end was dragged through the mud and jammed. It took precious time cleaning mud out of the outlet so the drill could be plugged in. The ends should have been put in a plastic bag wrapped with duct tape.

Drilling. The test drill we did demonstrated how fast we could bore in the rock and how difficult it was to start at a steep angle, no surprise. But the sound was another morale booster to Andy. In his mind, things were getting done when he heard that. It was a sound of encouragement.

Heat Management Good. Great job by the Iowa cavers. That action was key to maintaining the victim's temperature and ability to function. It was perhaps the single most important factor that led to his extrication at midnight. It allowed him to help himself and had a huge affect on what rescue actions were taken.

Heat Management Poor. Slow response time and provisions. Andy was wearing blue jeans and what I think were two cotton t-shirts-one long sleeved, and a sweatshirt. He was covered with cotton towels and a synthetic blanket. Not the best covering, but it was working. I got exasperated over the hot packs and hot water bottle. Nothing was arriving and what we had wasn't working. The nurse said to get some on him. I didn't have any. Then he started a series of violent shivers. The hot packs were not very hot, most just didn't work. It took forever to get new ones. There must have been difficulty outside getting them, but innovation arrived, a plastic bag filled with coffee. This meant people were scrambling on the surface. The hot water bottle went under his neck, the coffee bag on top. It took some maneuvering to get a semi-working hot pack under an arm. The other was worked down to his groin area with some difficulty. In the defense of the people on the surface, I learned later that fireman and others were moving and moving fast to get requests into the cave. Unfortunately, the heat packs didn't work, but the effort to get new ones and to get an electric blanket was punctual. Inquiries at neighboring homes took place also. The surface crew was doing all that was possible under the circumstances.

Smart move. I specifically requested Chris Ingebretsen's presence at the accident site. His power would have been helpful in the tug and pull scenario. He made an attempt to get in, and thought he could do it, but realized there was a good chance he would plug up the passage for quite a while. So instead he wisely stopped. He knew his limits and recognized the critical lifeline function of an open passage. All the messages and gear was going through that hole and we couldn't afford to have it plugged. Chris served on the evacuation team line by the constriction for the rest of the rescue, passing messages and gear back and forth to Mike Lace.

Relative. The father helped a bit to hold items and made comments to his

son, but he shouldn't have been there. We were just too busy to deal with this though, and didn't want a scene to damage Andy's confidence. He needed to be escorted out because he had no light or caving gear. We needed a caver standing there, not a fatigued and distraught father. I had made comments that we would be taking him out and the intention was to do this while John and Mark were absorbed in pulling. But the fact that he was there stifled verbalizing the analysis of the situation and describing plan A, B, and C to others. Plans that, in my mind, would be set to work simultaneously if there was enough physical space and caver power to do so.

Evacuation. After Andy was out of the crevice, he was led out in socks with no hardhat. In the case of his father, he had no hardhat either. In hindsight this would have been considered really dumb if something went wrong, like a slip or fall and bashing a head against the rock or a cut foot. We were so close to the entrance.. it was good to get them out of there and everything went well, but it was a mistake. No question about it.

#### **Other factors.**

We couldn't afford to have Mark up in the crevice by the boy. Mark tore his Achilles tendon in May. If he did it again, from some awkward or sustained move, he would be out of commission. There wouldn't be a problem getting him out of the cave, but we needed cavers, especially smaller ones with rescue experience and he fit the bill. That and it is hard to overstate the value of working with him for years on cave projects involving prying, lifting, drilling, and hauling.

Familiarity. It helped knowing each other. As a former member, I knew most of the Iowa Grotto cavers, having shared many a pleasant experience with these guys in the wet and muddy. It was like a reunion to work with people I hadn't seen for years. Comradery and team work, it goes a long way.

The Evacuation Team. Lots of folks in this group and terrific cooperation. As a general rule, a call for equipment went out and things got done. We need a platform. It was made. Get a spaceblanket. One appeared. Although later I heard there were some messages that got confused near the entrance, for the most part supplies were whisked in. Firemen worked hard on the surface to support the workers underground.

Jungle boots. A moment of aggravation would have been humorous under other circumstances. The mud sucked the sole off my boot not long after being inside. Walking around with it partly attached was like wearing a swim fin. A request for one right boot, size 10 1/2 went out. It took a while to fill that order. I sent a request for duct tape in the meantime. Afterwards, I learned Mark had the same thing happen. I don't know if he put a boot order in or not.

Absolute Chance. It was so fortunate that this incident occurred in that particular spot with solution pockets dissolved along some bedding planes. It provided key standing and maneuvering room. Had those not been there, it would have been a lot more difficult to stay in position for pulling. They were a huge help for footing and support and set in place around 200,000 years ago. Talk about good fortune.

Location. The rescue was taking place only 200 feet from the entrance. Although the constriction limited who could get to the patient, the short distance made for very quick response times for supplies and messages.

Rescue Equipment Storage. I was pawing through the cave office trailer moving boxes of uniform items, tickets, raincoats, and jackets to get to the three beat up boxes of rescue gear. There physically is no space or any special place



for this at Mystery Cave. I did get to it pretty fast, but it easily added another five minutes of fooling around.

Park Caving Equipment. By gradual purchases, the stockpile of lights, helmets, and protective gear has grown. Not quite to full capacity, but enough to supply several cavers. I selected several items to bolster my own gear.

### **Possibilities**

There were other rescue possibilities to work on. We might have been able to get a length of webbing around Andy's feet and extended out to the T. A haul system attached to this could provide a lot of forward force if he could keep his feet straight and his clothes and flesh didn't jam up on the walls.

Another possibility was to excavate the mud slope and try to get Mike Lace up and underneath Andy to push upward some way. If he couldn't fit, Jessica Martin might. A Fillmore County deputy was driving her from Forestville to the cave. An employee of the park and a new caver, she is slim and others had marveled to me how easily she could move and chimney in Mystery. She was nearby and available.

We probably could have Ed or Chris work some webbing underneath Andy's feet and down the slope. By securing it at one end and using some mechanical advantage at the other, we might have been able to pull him upward in the crevice. This could have been done simultaneously as John and Mark were drilling.

Most of the MSS could and would have been called out had the need continued. Change of personnel would have to be done at some point and the effort would be sustained, but it never went that far.

### **Final Thoughts**

At the fire hall, we had a chance to discuss what circumstances didn't allow us to talk about in the cave. John was quite confident he could remove all the rock we needed in good time. And if it didn't work with wedges, he could still do it safely with explosives. His expertise and tools at the site provided options that would not have existed for some time had he not been there. If Andy gave out, John's role would have changed from important to essential.

Andy had no concept of the time and was apparently surprised it was dark when he exited the cave. He had been trapped for over 12 hours. I marvel at how hypothermia was warded off. The encouragement, his exertion, and the insulation worked effectively.

The sheriff, firemen, and ems authorities were completely supportive of the caver effort. It was a model of an organization stepping back and allowing outsiders (cavers) in to do the job in their own local jurisdiction, something not easy to do sometimes. When I got back to the surface at the conclusion of the rescue, firemen were there helping cavers out in every way possible and commending our efforts. The sheriff, fire chief, firefighters, and others, personally thanked us as a group back at the fire hall. I was impressed. It was really a nice way to finish a cave rescue.

Nothing like this happens without a team effort. Every caver there was on the team and collectively we did more as a group than what any individual effort could accomplish. A wealth of underground skill existed among the 12 cavers at the rescue. That expertise was not acquired alone, but in the collective theater of caving experiences by small groups of cave enthusiasts... experiences underground that forge bonds of cooperation, friendship, comradery, and the ability to handle situations underground as they arise.

## ZOMBIE LAKE AND OTHERS

Zombie Lake Cave and 5 others, Jones County, IA  
27 October, 2001  
Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Ed Klausner, and Mike Lace

by Ed Klausner

We had planned on a day of skipping from one cave entrance to the next in a valley in Jones County that had previously been visited by Mike and Gary. Gary knew the landowner and Mike and Gary visited earlier in the month, but did not have time to survey. They found one phreatic tube with water coming out and it had a nice echo. That would be our first stop. We were saving the name "Zombie Lake" for the first suitable cave, and we finally found it.

We quickly located the entrance and started surveying. I was lead tape and Chris was behind me doing instrument while Mike was on book. The first shot was through mud with a few formations along the way. After 15 to 20 feet, the tube bent to the right and there was standing water a few inches deep. There was no way to avoid it, so I went through. The ceiling had lots of stalactites in the 2-inch range. I set the station on a bank and Chris took instrument readings. The next shot was going to be through more water and it was time to rethink this survey. Since it was only 10AM, we would all be wet for the rest of the day of ridgewalking. We decided to delay the survey until the end of the day. I could either go back to the truck and change, or walk around wet. I chose the latter as the holes in the exposed rock looked too inviting to delay. Most of the holes, of course, were too shallow to count as Iowa caves.

In the immediate area of Zombie Lake Cave, Gary noticed a breakdown area at the same level with water coming out in several spots. He speculated that this may be related to Zombie Lake Cave. We should probably spend some more time in this area and see if there is an additional entrance.

We did not have a good cave naming day. After Zombie Lake Cave, which we were pretty pleased with, we were out of additional names. When Mike and Chris named Hitchhiker's Cave, it seemed much easier to go with Lower Hitchhiker's Cave and change their name to Upper Hitchhiker's Cave. These were a pair of mechanical caves. We found two additional mechanical caves and one solutional cave, bringing the daily total of completed surveys to five and the yearly total to 73.

## SKUNK CAVE RESCUE

By Doug Schmuecker  
Saturday 10-06-2001

At about 4:50 pm, Mike Lace called, and said he was told someone was pinned in Skunk Cave. I told him I would call Winneshiek County Sheriff's Office and get right back with him. Winneshiek County put me in contact with Howard County and Cresco Fire Dept. Fire chief said we need cavers and briefed me over the phone. There was a 15-year-old trapped since 11:30 am.

At 5:10 pm, I left for Skunk Cave after calling Mike Lace, loading equipment and starting down the call-out list, which Winneshiek County had been sent, but didn't have.

Two hours and ten minutes later, I arrived at Skunk Cave. The caver had been stuck since about 11:00 am. Cresco fire department was on scene, Mike Nelson was



in the cave. No other cavers on scene yet. I requested an ambulance to stand-by due to potential hypothermia problems.

I went into the cave, but couldn't make it through a restriction that I'd been through 20 years ago. Talked to Mike about the stuck caver. His name is Andy and he was cold but doing fair. Andy's father was with him. Things started happening.

Chris Beck, Mike Lace and Ed Klausner arrived within an hour and made assess to the patient. Mike Nelson came out for a break.

Mike Lace and I discussed several options for getting Andy out. First, prevent him from getting colder and rewarm; second, use morphine to help pull him out as used 23 years ago. If done would have to carry out; third, if Andy's condition became critical, just use ropes to pull him out; and fourth, just work him loose/break some rock. I tried to get through restriction a couple more times to get advanced medical help there if needed. But I didn't want to create an additional problem by getting stuck.

Cresco ambulance dispatched Winneshiek County Ambulance to the scene for possible advanced care.

We started getting requests for more equipment beyond the restriction. Warren Netherton and other Minnesota cavers arrived and Winneshiek County Ambulance requested a helicopter from Rochester. Aboard were a doctor and nurse, small enough to access and do a medical assessment. Sized lumber, hot packs and warm fluids, hammer drill and an electric cord were needed.

I made several trips in and out of the cave to discuss options with Mike Lace, and make sure resources were getting in the cave.

A rescue team from Winoa, Minnesota showed up and were rigging ropes and getting a basket litter ready to send in. I explained to them, the most that may be needed was a sked and a low-angle line.

An integrated command was set-up outside. The doctor briefed chief deputy sheriff, Asst. fire chief, lead paramedic, and myself. Mike Lace and myself had decided it was time to notify the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center to put a team on stand-by since this would take some time. I explained what it was and the sheriff's office had to make the request for assistance. We had to call my residence to get the number.

Phil LaRue and Larry Welch arrived, and were assigned various tasks. An electric blanket was being sent in, as word came out Andy was freed. He made it out with assistance. The doctor checked him out and he went home with his father after about 12 hours. All gear was hauled out and sorted.

Debriefing was held at Cresco Fire Department. Many organizations that had never met before worked well together.

Note: Just because you would do something different next time doesn't mean you did something wrong this time.

Areas to improve:

1. Get information on Air Force Rescue Center out to sheriff's office again. Done twice in past when I worked for Iowa County.
2. Caver call-out list sent out again. Done one year ago, wasn't sent to Howard County.
3. Make sure above information comes to the scene, left with Mrs. Doug (Kathy) Schmuecker to make calls this time. I have a copy machine.
4. Build device to warm breathing air for caving victim if needed.

#### SKUNK CAVE RESCUE

Skunk Cave, Winneshiek County, IA  
October 6, 2001

by Ed Klausner

Disclaimer: Many people were involved with the rescue at Skunk Cave on October 6<sup>th</sup>, and all were important for the success of this rescue. The following account is personal - only the limited things I saw and people I saw. For a good deal of the time, I was in a small passage where it was difficult to see and hear what was happening in other parts of the cave. Other peoples' accounts will fill in many of the gaps.

Sometime in the afternoon of October 6th, Mike Lace called to say there was a reported rescue in progress in Skunk Cave and suggested I get gear ready once he determined that it was real and help was needed. I got a call from Mike a little before 5 PM saying that the rescue was real and a teenager was stuck. I picked him up at Coralville and we drove to Skunk Cave as quickly as we could. We called Chris Beck on his cell phone, and redirected him to Skunk Cave as he was already enroute to nearby Coldwater Cave. This got Chris to the cave a half hour or so sooner than if he had gone to Coldwater first. We also got a mobile call from Phil and Pam LaRue telling us they were heading up to the cave to assist.

We had hoped the kid had been stuck in the keyhole area of the cave and he was already out. When we got close to the cave, we could see flashing lights from a fire truck and knew that it was not the keyhole area because he would have already been freed. The keyhole is a narrowing of the passage relatively close to the entrance (around 75 feet).

Doug Schmuecker was at the scene and told us to head into the cave as soon as we were ready. Sixteen-year-old Andy was stuck about 200 feet or so from the entrance. At his head were Mike Nelson and Phil. Phil, I learned later, was Andy's father. At Andy's feet was Chris Beck. Andy was stuck in a horizontal tube, his head down about 10 degrees from his feet. He had slipped down near the bottom of the tube where it was smaller than the top. The tube was only 2 feet or so tall, so there was not room to get in over the top of him to lift him up. Andy was on his side and in a good deal of pain due to a piece of lumber that was put in under him to keep him from slipping down further. When I first saw him, it looked grim and I saw no easy way to get him out. He and his father were flashlight cavers, dressed in not very warm cotton clothes and had no helmets.

Mike Nelson and Chris Beck had arrived earlier and had tried all the obvious ways to get him out. Mike was able to reach in and lift him up a bit by his shoulder to provide some comfort and see if he could get him out that way. Mike was cold and tired when I arrived and was glad to have someone else try to get Andy free. Unfortunately, I am quite a bit shorter than Mike and could not reach under Andy's head and lift him by his shoulder for very long.



passage leading to Andy's feet and was using his hands to warm Andy's feet. Andy was cool to the touch. I removed my gloves and tried to warm his face with my hands. We had towels that Wanda Flatland provided. When we requested heat packs, they were quickly provided (as were all materials). Heat packs turned out to be problematic as most did not work. I had one small chemical heat pad in my pack and put it on Andy's neck. It was small and did not last long, but we soon had other heat packs that did help warm him.

After what seemed like an hour or so, Warren Netherton and Mark White from the MSS and Minnesota DNR arrived. I found Warren's presence very comforting. He was calm and seemed knowledgeable about rescues. I think it also had an effect on Andy, but he still lapsed into screaming fits. Warren talked constantly to Andy and told him everything he was going to try. I think this was very beneficial. Andy had little concept of time and thought he was trapped for 3 or 4 hours. In fact, he was trapped for close to 10 when he made that remark.

Warren tried a few different ways to get Andy out and we finally decided to try to use some lumber to get under Andy and try to raise him up using a lever approach. I was surprised at how quickly lumber appeared in the size we requested.

Chris Beck was cold and needed someone to relieve him. I had trouble finding the passage leading to Andy's feet, but finally found it. The first part was a canyon passage that was very narrow on the bottom and wider, but slippery at the top. It was going to be hard to get back later when we were more tired. The passage that led to Andy's feet was a small tube. Chris had trouble backing out of this tube passage. I thought I would have an easier time by removing my knee and elbow pads so I would have more room. I'm sure the passage was not as long as I thought, but it still wasn't pleasant.

Chris waited for me at a junction while I went down the slight slope towards Andy's feet. Once at his feet, I helped keep him warm by rubbing his feet with my hands, same as Chris had done.

Warren finally decided that the best option was to have Andy try to move forward while he lifted his shoulder and I pushed his feet. This was tried before while Chris pushed his feet without much success, but there seemed to be little alternative. Over the course of hours, this is what finally got Andy free. Sometimes he did not move at all, sometimes by a small amount. After a while, Warren was able to reach Andy's waist. Unfortunately, Andy was not wearing a belt, but Warren grabbed him by the waist band of his jeans.

Later, I heard John Ackerman from Minnesota arrive and talk to Andy while assessing the situation. I also heard a doctor and nurse who came in for a while. It was difficult to hear anything but Andy and the person at his head as their bodies muffled the sounds of anyone else and I was not in the best position to look up and forward.

Once Andy was free, he was escorted out of the cave by others. By the time Chris and I got back to the main passage to rejoin the others, Andy and his father were gone. Chris, Mike and I didn't want to go out just then as we didn't want to return to the cave later to clean up (and we were afraid the media might be outside), so we decided to clean everything out of the cave before we left. Chris, Mike, Lace and I were furthest from the entrance and handed items forward. Some of it became comical as everything was covered with mud and the heavy equipment was difficult to lift and move when our feet were stuck in the mud. Larry Welch had also arrived for a Coldwater trip and was directed to the cave. He, Phil LaRue, and others that I couldn't see all helped clear gear and supplies out of the cave.

The firefighters and EMT people were great. They helped in any way they could. Once out, they invited us to the Cresco firehouse and fed us pizza while we discussed the rescue.

All in all, it went quite well. We will leave a call out list with the appropriate people so we can get cavers to the scene sooner if requested. We will all think of ways to improve our response time and have rescue supplies cached at various locations.

## THE CALL

October 6, 2001

by Mike Nelson I.I.C.

On the morning of October 6<sup>th</sup>, I didn't make my bed. That's unlike me, but I felt it was about time to change the sheets anyhow.

I spent the day doing last minute, pre-winter chores around the place. With those items knocked off, I was just starting to work on a tree that had blown down in a storm several weeks ago when the outside ringer for my phone rang.

Generally, I make no undo effort in answering it. Nobody seems to have the patience to let it ring over three times anymore. But for some unknown reason I ran for it. The name of the caller, which escapes me now, didn't bring up a face. Normally this is something that I am unusually good at, especially since he indicated that we once caved together. The message though, I'll never forget; "There is a young man trapped in Skunk Cave."

I exchanged some phone numbers with this person, made one to the Cresco fire department, gave them some names to call, threw basic gear into the truck and headed out at an abnormal pace.

Within ten miles down the road I was stopped. After a terse explanation I was let go without a ticket but with the briefest of admonitions to maintain a relatively moderate speed and a wish of good luck.

My first sigh of relief came when I saw that the authorities had managed to keep a lid on the story. There was no circus of unnecessary people crowding the scene. This of course was of little matter when the second sigh was denied me. My ardent prayers had not been answered. The young man had not been freed, and this would turn out to be more than a pleasant Saturday afternoon's drive. I suggested to those in charge to come up with some sources of artificial heat and geared up.

The presence of an actual caver on the scene provided a lot of encouragement and for whatever it was worth, that was all I truly managed to provide. I didn't realize until later the fantastic courage of one responder named Bill. He had never been in a cave before but had traversed a passage I had always avoided as too claustrophobic to get to the feet of the unfortunate young man. He had maintained this position for hours. When I arrived I relieved another responder, Matt, opposite Bill at the young mans head. They asked to be excused. I found myself alone with a young man named Andy, who was securely wedged in what we call "the animal run". His father, Phil, a mere eight feet away in safe passage was as surely trapped by parental devotion. He would remain there until his son was free.

My involvement in Andy's rescue amounted to only providing comfort and encouragement to both Andy and Phil until the troops arrived. Other than providing minor physical support to relieve the strain on Andy's neck, left shoulder and elbow, distraction was the name of the game. I explained how Andy wasn't the first to find himself in this particular pinch and that the previous effort was straightforward once the help had arrived. The only concession to the truth that I made was to minimize the elapsed time of his inconvenience. I embellished a few of the predicaments that I had gotten myself into over the years. Placing myself in his pickle while totally submerged in water brightened his own perspective somewhat. As both Andy and his father were of the Christian persuasion, we delved into some of the overlooked simplicities of that source of confidence. Andy's overall composure was exemplary for all but a few brief moments of his ordeal.



After a few cavers showed up, I left the cave to let my own composure run it's natural course. I went back in a couple more times to lend assistance. As more cavers came to the scene I excused myself from the cave. I sat in my own truck with the heater cranked on full and shivered like I haven't since I quit taking large doses of LSD.

At length, the heightened activity outside told me that something was happening. When Andy appeared I ceased my supplications for his safety and replaced them with praises of thanksgiving. I continued to wait until sometime later, when Phil emerged. Then, with the hustle and bustle of men and gear coming out of the cave, I left for home.

I dropped my stiffened muddy clothes on the porch, turned my shower brown and then dropped into bed, thankful at not having to even turn back the sheets.

#### SYNOPSIS OF EVENT

I received the call about a stuck just after 4:00pm on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of October. I immediately phoned those in authority of whom to contact. Wanda Flatland would be best to coordinate regional cavers. Warren Netherton and John Ackerman were the nearest experienced cavers. With that done, I hastily assembled minimal gear and headed out.

Arriving in the vicinity of Skunk Cave just after 6:00pm, I requested the first "official" I came upon, in a firetruck up on the plateau, to find some sources of artificial heat, realizing that I should have gotten them started on that with the initial phone call. The scene at the cave was better than I had any reason to expect. As the fire department radios could not reach into Cresco from that low spot, all communications were radioed to that first individual I encountered and he communicated with the department via cell phone. With no "scannable" radio waves, the situation was unexploitable.

Considering that almost six hours had passed since the call had gone out, there were suprisingly few rescue vehicles at the sight, well placed and not in each others way should movement be needed. The personnel present were visibly relieved to have a "real caver" on site.

I passed several would-be rescuers in the cave before the "keyhole". Beyond that point in the main passage was Phil, the father of the victim. There were a few assorted tools and a selection of boards. Matt had been attending to Andy, the "stuckee" at his head, a short distance in from the larger passage. Bill was attending to Andy at his feet. I would later find out that neither had ever been in a cave before. Bill is, in my book, truly heroic for negotiating that passage for his first cave trip. They both asked to be excused. They had been at their stations for several hours. I found myself alone with a uncomfortable looking young man and his terrified father.

The fireman had managed to slide some boards under Andy to keep him from slipping in any deeper. After being cold, these were causing him his greatest discomfort. Having to pee something fierce was bothersome too, but Andy was lucid enough to know that that would shortly make him colder yet.

What little I could provide at that point is mentioned in the accompanying trip report.

Most of the other details should be provided by the others involved. I just wish to make note of some thoughts here.

I told the cavers the approximate elapsed time that Andy felt he had been stuck. This was a important illusion to maintain, for Andy's sake.

I noted that once Andy was free, to keep a close eye on Phil. This proved to be a sensible precaution.

One more thing I'd like to add. My conversations with Phil indicated that he

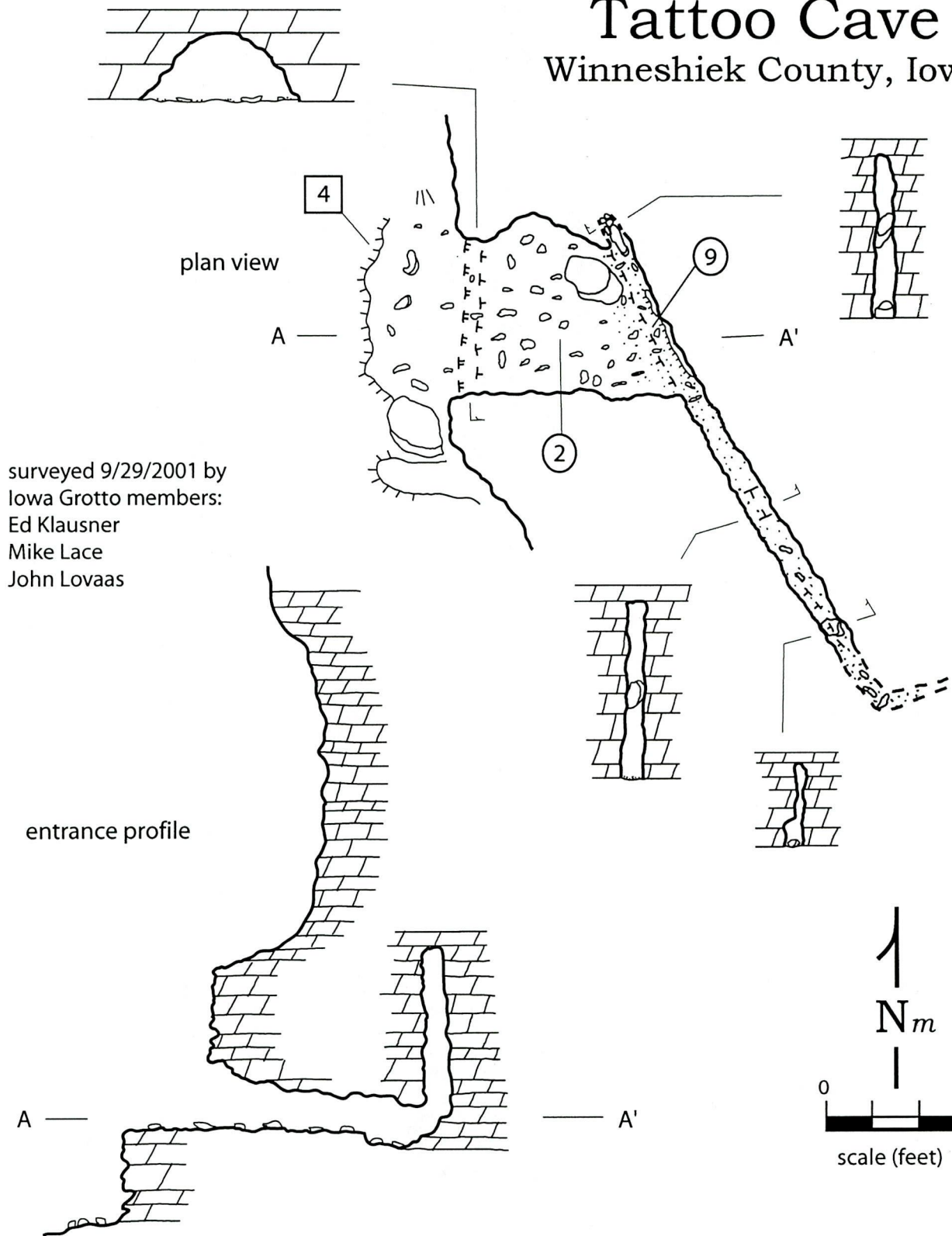
had a lot of experience in this cave over the years. The attitude of being elitists and holding everyone to our standards is noble but impractical. Some caves are accessible and known to the general public and frequented by "flashlight cavers". The fact that Skunk Cave does obviously see a great deal of traffic and only has two incidences over the years says much about flashlighters. Just as many relatively unqualified people raise families, unqualified people obviously do a limited amount of generally successful caving. Just because they don't have training, hardhats and appropriate footwear or clothing is no reason to belittle them.





# Tattoo Cave

Winneshiek County, Iowa



N.S.S. standard map symbols  
total surveyed length = 22.3 feet (6.8 meters)



Klausner 2001



