

August 2002

Intercom, Volume 38, No. 4, July-August 2002

Scott Dankof

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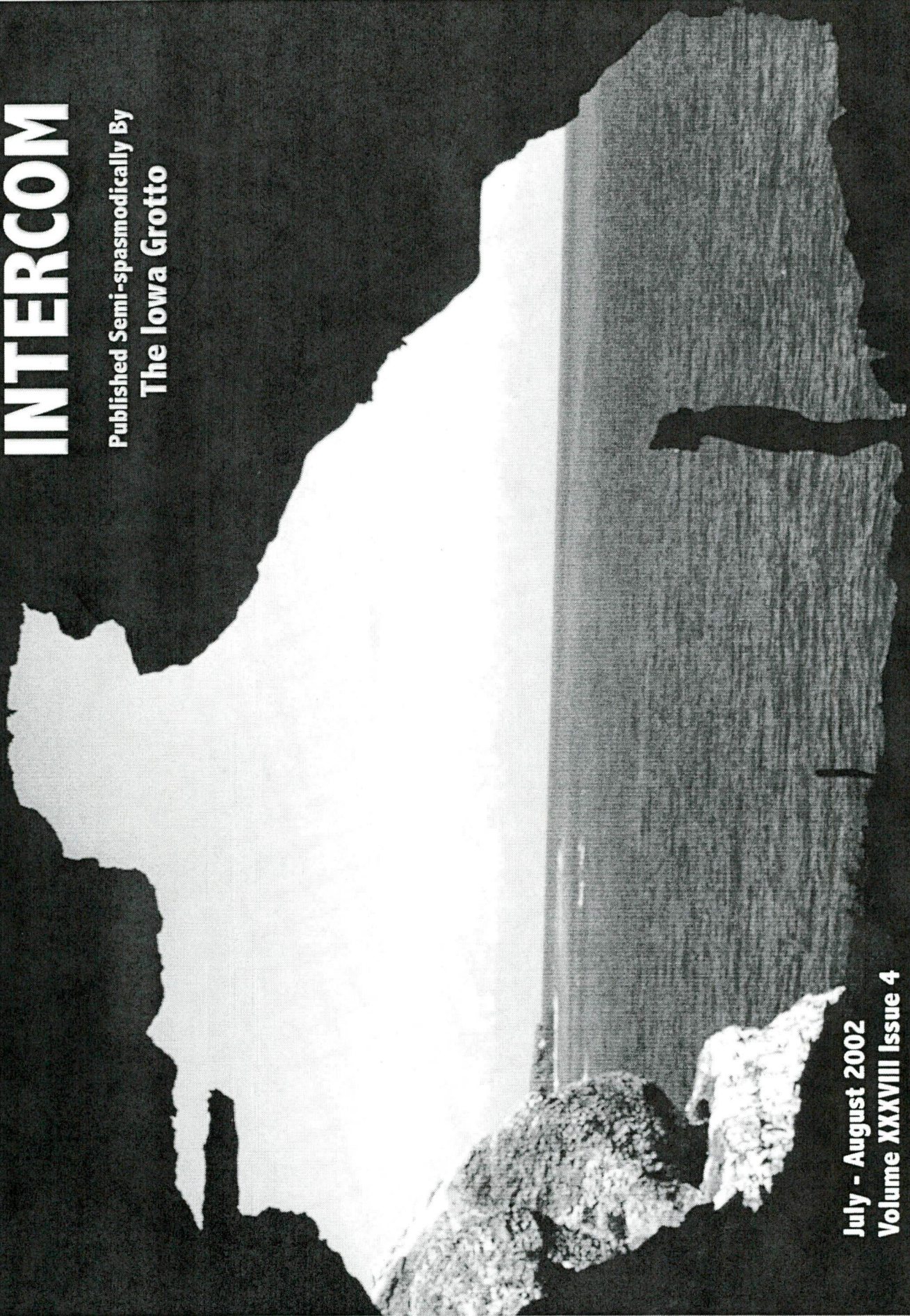
Dankof, Scott, "Intercom, Volume 38, No. 4, July-August 2002" (2002). *Intercom*. 29.
<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/intercom/29>

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INTERCOM

Published Semi-spasmodically By
The Iowa Grotto

July - August 2002
Volume XXVIII Issue 4



I N T E R C O M

Volume 38, Issue 4
July - August, 2002

Iowa Grotto

P.O. Box 228
Iowa City, IA 52244

Membership Dues: due January 1, \$15.00 per year, includes INTERCOM and Hot-Line subscriptions. INTERCOM subscriptions only are \$13.00 per year. The Iowa Grotto reserves the right to decline membership during or after a probationary period.

Due Dates: for submission of material for publication in the INTERCOM are September 1 and November 1. Send material for publication, e-mail, disk or hard copy, to:

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Coordinate photographs for publication in the INTERCOM with Scott Dankof, the INTERCOM photo and cover editor.

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: Ed Klausner in entrance of Csistema Faro Isla de Mona, PR.
Photo by: Mike Lace

Back Cover Photo: Pam Duncan in Cueva Lirio Faro Losettas Isla de Mona, PR.
Photo by: Ed Klausner



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

Chairman - - - - - Mike Lace
Vice Chairman - - - - Ed Klausner
Secretary Treasurer - Phil LaRue

Volume 38

Issue 4

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IOWA GROTTO MINUTES
July 24, 2002
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 7:27p.m., with nine members present. Minutes from the June 26, 2002, meeting were read and approved. A treasurer's report was given which showed balances of \$747.68 in the Coldwater fund; \$260.37 in the General fund; and \$133.72 in petty cash.

TRIP REPORTS: Liz Robinson and Brad Smith reported on their trip to the N.S.S. Convention in Maine. Ed Klausner reported on the trip to Coldwater Cave with Ryan Butler, Elizabeth Miller and Mike Nelson to the Spong, while Jim Robertson and Larry Welch did some resurvey work in Sand Canyon. Also that weekend, Pat Kambesis and John Lovaas worked on her thesis project. Ed then reported on their survey trip to Isla de Mona, Puerto Rico. Grotto members on the trip were Chris Beck, Pat K., Hanna Klausner and Elizabeth M.. The map for Erickson Cave was completed for a total of 2.5 miles of passage. A total of four miles of cave passage was surveyed on the trip. Several sea caves were visited and two were surveyed. Numerous other caves were visited during this trip. Many photographs were taken. He concluded his report on a survey trip to the Little Princess Mine near Plunder, Illinois. Loren Schutt reported on his trip to Mystery Cave in Minnesota. FUTURE TRIPS: See the July Hotline and the N.S.S. News for details. There will be trips to Illinois for lead checking and surveying. Contact Mike L. or Ed K. for details. There will be upcoming trips to Coldwater Cave and surrounding area to assist Pat K. with her ongoing project. The Grotto Picnic is August 3rd and 4th, at Matsell Bridge County Park, Linn Co.. OLD BUSINESS: Volume III of the Cave Map Book is available for \$25.00. Republished back issues of the Intercom are still available. The Grotto Library is still looking for library materials. The upcoming picnic was discussed. Grotto T-shirts and map books will be available. New Business : The Intercom deadline is September 1st. There will be a slide show showing some of the photographs taken during the trip to Puerto Rico last month. Congratulations to our editor, Scott Dankof, for his award for "Best Photographic Cover", presented at the N.S.S. Convention last month. Liz Robinson accepted the award on Scott's behalf. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m..

IOWA GROTTO MINUTES
August 28th, 2002
Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 8:00 p.m. with five members present. Minutes from the July meeting were read and approved. No formal treasurer's report was given. TRIP REPORTS: Tom Hruska reported on a trip to Hunter's Cave. Greg McCarty described leadchecking and visits to several springs in Fayette, Winneshiek and Clayton counties in June and July. Mike Lace reported on a digging trip in Coldwater Cave and survey efforts in the Little Princess Mine and Gill Mine in August. Trips to Bogus Cave, Doll Cave and Searryl's Cave were made during the Grotto Picnic. FUTURE TRIPS: Continuing surveys in several lead mines in Jo Daviess County, IL are planned as are several small Iowa cave surveys. The 2003 NSS Convention will be held in Porterville, CA. No old business was discussed. OLD BUSINESS: The Grotto Picnic raised \$319 to support Grotto publication efforts. The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the Intercom is September 1st. NEW BUSINESS: The Iowa Grotto recently received a grant from the Richmond Area Speleological Society (RASS) for the purchase of a set of Grotto survey gear to be made available to any Grotto member. Tom Hruska donated yet another armful of cave books to the Grotto library and plans to donate a full set of NSS News and Bulletins in

the future. Gaps in the existing Grotto collection of these periodicals would then be filled and the remainder sold to interested members. With no additional new business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m..

SACRIFICE OF THE VIRGINS

Cueva de los Pajaros (aka Cueva Caballo), Isla de Mona, Puerto Rico

July 3, 4, 7, 10 and 11, 2002

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Don Coons, Pam Duncan, Pat Kambesis, Howard Kalnitz, Ed and Hannah Klausner, Mike Lace, Elizabeth Miller, and Penelope Pooler

After setting up camp on the beach at Isla de Mona, Chris thought he would sacrifice some virgins to the closest cave. The huge entrances of Cueva de los Pajaros (also known as Cueva Caballo) were only a one-minute walk from camp and he had no trouble getting Elizabeth, Hannah and me to join him. Even though I had seen many pictures of the caves on Mona, I was totally unprepared for the size, complexity, and beauty of this cave. The caves on the island are flank margin caves and have a different speleogenesis than the solutional caves of Iowa. They have huge rooms with many columns that give the caves a maze like appearance. The view from the entrances - palm trees, the beach, and the ocean were not what we had grown accustomed to in Iowa.

Chris assured me that Pat would gradually break me into surveying in rooms where you couldn't see the walls. He said that she would have me help a sketcher and then try it myself. I guess there was more sacrificing to be done, and the next morning Pat asked me if I brought my clipboard so I could sketch. I'd never sketched on 8 1/2 by 11 paper and never sketched where there were no walls. Pat told me not to worry and just sketch what I could see from the survey line. Don Coons and Penelope Pooler set stations and gave me the data for several shots. I then sketched while they went off to help someone else. It took a while, but I got the hang of this type of sketching and after a few stations, started to really enjoy it. In the afternoon, I continued sketching while Penelope did tape and instrument. Others in our ten-person group surveyed in different areas.

Three days later, we were back in this cave sketching while Elizabeth did tape and instrument. Unfortunately, we wound up going into a large room with lots of bat guano. There wasn't much airflow and it was pretty hot. One alcove had fresh hot guano with lots of cockroaches on it. Needless to say, the alcove was sketched quickly and we moved on.

Lunch was in the atrium with the other survey teams, followed by a nap. The atrium was a room with a collapsed ceiling that allowed the sunlight to pour into the cave. Trees were growing in the atrium and there were several birds chirping away adding to the beauty of the room. Elizabeth and I continued surveying in the afternoon. One nice thing about surveying on Mona was that in the late afternoon when we returned to camp, we simply put on bathing suits and got our masks and snorkels and walked the 50 or so feet to the ocean to cool off and look at the fish.

My last sketching day was on July 10th when Don Coons and my daughter Hannah and I surveyed a large room. Hannah recorded data in the morning while Don did tape and instrument. After lunch, Hannah headed back to camp while Don and I continued surveying.

On the 11th, I helped Chris photograph some of the large rooms. By the end of the trip, just over 5 miles of cave were surveyed in Cueva de los Pajaros. The survey in this cave was not completed, so that will be left for the next expedition.

PHOTO TRIP

Cueva Lirio, Cueva Faro, Cueva Losetas, Isla de Mona, Puerto Rico

July 6, 2002

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Don Coons, Pam Duncan, Howard Kalnitz, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace, Elizabeth Miller, and Penelope Pooler

On our third full day on the Isla de Mona, we decided to take a photo trip to visit three connected caves: Cueva Lirio (cave of the lillies), Cueva Faro (cave of the lighthouse), and Cueva Loquetas (cave of the traps). These caves had been surveyed on previous trips and Marc Ohms drafted the map. Even though the caves are connected, they are rather distinct.

We left camp relatively early in the morning and hiked up an old road to the top of the mesita. The mesita is the flat area on top of the island that is rather hot during the day, thus the early start. We had a great view of the ocean and saw quite a few colorful plants and animals along the way. We stopped to photograph the colorful caterpillars on some oleander. It looked like it would be difficult to bushwack on the mesita as the cactus was quite thick.

The entrance to Cueva Lirio was a sinkhole we came to before we reached the lighthouse. The lighthouse is no longer in use, but is quite picturesque. Cueva Lirio is quite well decorated and we soon entered the huge Cathedral room. Even bigger is the Fate of the Cathedral Room. A collapsed ceiling and full sized trees growing in the middle shows what will eventually happen to the Cathedral Room.

The first thing that struck us about Cueva Faro were the cave pearls; tens of thousands of them. They were so thick that we had to walk on them as they covered the floor and the path went through them. There was evidence of the guano mining operation that occurred in the mid 1800's and we took some pictures of the narrow gauge rail that was still visible in some parts of the cave. There was even an old mining car that was rusting away.

Cueva Faro (and Cueva Loquetas) had gypsum stalactites and other gypsum formations. We took quite a few pictures before stopping for lunch. Lunch was on a "lunch ledge" also known as the "nap ledge". The ledge was 100 or so feet above the ocean with a spectacular view. The ledge was at the contact between the relatively smooth dolomite and Lirio Limestone. It was perfect for napping. While on the ledge, we had a nice view of a marine turtle and were, in turn, watched by the boobies. They were quite curious and hovered a few feet from us and just stared.

After our nap, we continued photographing the wonderful formations. Once Chris found the connection to Cueva Loquetas, we headed off to photograph the square cave pearls and the shield that they had found on a previous trip. From one of the far entrances of Cueva Loquetas, we climbed the cliff to the mesita and headed back to camp, passing the lighthouse for a closer look. A large iguana was watching us, but seemed not to be threatened, as he didn't start bobbing his head or body. We were told that these iguanas (Giant Rock Iguana) were 70 to 75 years old. They had quite a few scars from previous encounters with other iguanas and could move quite quickly if so inclined.

It was a hot trip back to the campsite, a reminder of why we left early in the morning. After a day of sightseeing, it would be time to get back to work the following day and continue surveying.

ISLA DE MONA - 2002

Participants:

Pat Kambesis, Mike Lace, Chris Beck, Penelope Pool; Ed Klausner, Elizabeth Miller, Hannah Klausner, Don Coons, Pam Duncan, and Howard Kalnitz.

Cueva Puente

Chris and I wandered down the coast to map what I thought was a small chunk of relatively simple cave that was spotted on the last trip. It was a simple plan. The caves of Mona often answer such plans with wonderfully complex surprises.

Located right in between two caves we had already mapped (Cueva Sopressa and Cueva del Agua); the main entrance was reached by a climb up the broken remnants of the cliff face. The start of the cave was a decorated, sun-washed chamber with crawlways leading off of the back wall.

It didn't take long to map more than a hundred feet of pleasant passage and Chris took a short siesta while I wrapped up the sketch and poked around the western corner of the cave near the cliff edge.

A narrow ledge, some thirty feet above the shore, led under the dripline and around a corner of the cliff. To be thorough, it really needed to be looked at - just to make sure it didn't go. The traverse was exposed but manageable and soon a small window, big enough to crawl into, appeared just above the ledge. The crawlway led into a large chamber and yet another with small galleries winding deeper into the cliff. I could see the wheels coming off of our simple plan as the cave wasn't quite finished with us yet. I went back to rouse Chris and we continued the survey into the rest of the cave - nearly double of what we had already done. The total rang up 475 feet of surveyed passage.

The cave appears to form a distinct upper level along the rock face just above Cueva del Agua. We had caught glimpses of this upper segment from below but had found no obvious connection to it or any easy route up on previous visits. Furthermore, there may be yet another disconnected layer of cave passage above the one we were in but again it was inaccessible to us. A walk to the edge of the plateau (Meseta) with vertical gear would have to wait until next time.

Cueva Manzanía

There are supposedly four toxic species of plants on Mona. Some toxic enough that contact with the leaves, bark or sap will make you wish that all you had was poison ivy. Manzanía is a tree that falls into this category and legend has it that men were lashed to such trees as a form of punishment. Even standing under the tree when it rains is a bad idea.

Westward from our camp is a section of cave-ridden cliff with a thick barrier of this nasty foliage. Chris and I wanted to map at least one of the many small caves he had seen there on the last trip. The jungle was too thick for us venture as far as we wanted to that day but the first unmapped shadow in the cliff looked comparatively accessible.

We made our way up through dense clusters of manzanía and eroded rubble to finally climb into the large entrance just as it began to rain. The entry chamber had a stoopway leading into a low wide chamber almost completely excavated for the fertile guano years before. You could see the original sediment line on the wall some two or three feet above the current floor. The miners had spared some clusters of formations in tiny alcoves along the side but most of the room was barren of anything but hand dug pits and a few of the miner's autographs scattered along the ceiling.

Chris sketched the 120 feet of cave while I snapped a few pictures. We suddenly realized that the ceiling of the entry chamber was thick with boxwork - the first example we had seen on the island so far and we were as long way from Wind Cave. The surprises just keep coming on Mona!

Cueva de la Casa de Erickson ("Cueva Chito")

This was the third trip to extend the survey of Cueva de la Casa de Erickson. Named after a homesteader who had built a home at the foot of the cliff and its cave, we learned that it is also called Cueva Chito after a fisherman who moved in after Erickson was moved off. All that remains of the homesteading are a cistern foundation and debris.

There was a lot of scoffing going around camp about finishing this particular project on this trip and after the first couple of days of mapping I was beginning to wonder too. The northern section of the cave was

a complex network of large, well-decorated rooms confined to mostly one level halfway up the cliff face. We had finished this section on the last trip and came to a ledge where you could look out over the jungle to an arcing stretch of cliff that made a bowl shape. The other half of the cave was waiting for us in the hollow walls of this bowl. You see one large shadow after another, all the way to the other side of the bowl some half mile away.

The seldom-visited southern section was very different from what we had already mapped. Heavily mined for guano, not as much decoration remained in its many large chambers. It was far more multi-level than we expected so progress was slow at first with long days spent in the sweltering dark rooms where no sea breeze could reach. It took several trips but the dripline of the cave finally played out and the last remaining rooms and crawlways were mopped up. There were no real problems along the way except for one encounter with wasps and one with big black hairy spiders that make a buzzing noise. We discovered that Pam "doesn't do spiders".

The total survey stands at 2.64 miles, which was already connected to the nearby five miles worth of passage in Cueva Pajaros. Convention dictates that the system will be named after the longer of the two caves so "Systema Pajaros" it is. Thanks to everyone who, over the past few years, have helped out with mapping this relatively tiny segment of a monstrously cavernous place. In all, the Mona Project has mapped over 20 miles of cave on the SE side of the island during the course of five expeditions so far. We are no where near finishing what remains.

RIO TANAMA

Observatory Cave on the Rio Tanama, Arecibo, Puerto Rico

July 16, 2002

by Ed Klausner

Don Coons, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace, and Penelope Pooler

The Rio Tanama (butterfly in the language of the Taino) disappears into seven different caves along its course. One of these is under the radio telescope at Arecibo in Puerto Rico. Gear for this trip was a little unusual as it included a PFD (personal floatation device).

We started out from the parking lot for the radio telescope and hiked past a good view of the radio telescope dish to the river Tanama. We hiked along the river where we could, hiked in the river where it was shallow, and swam or floated when it was safe (no rapids or waterfalls). Much of the river course that we saw was through a steep canyon and there were no signs of civilization. It probably looked the same thousands of years ago. The cliff face at the entrance of the cave was about 600 feet high with the cave entrance 120 or so feet high. As we had come to expect, the cave was nicely decorated.

The river flowed about 1000 or so feet through the cave before exiting through a much smaller opening (perhaps a third of the size of the entrance where the river enters the cave). We both hiked and floated through portions of the cave. Bats were plentiful. The last 150 or so feet of the cave was narrower than the rest of the cave and the water was deeper and the current stronger. This presented a problem for me getting back upriver. Swimming was difficult due to my heavy boots, cave pack, kneepads and PFD that all seemed to get in the way. I managed to make my way along one wall and was helped the last 10 or 15 feet by Don and Mike. The rest of the river section was much easier as the river was wider and the current not as strong. We left the river when it was dark and hiked through the forest using our flashlights.

At the clearing where we could see the telescope dish, we were treated to a science fiction scene. The dish was lighted and the telescope receptor, suspended from three 300-foot towers, was making a humming noise as it was being repositioned. It looked like a spaceport.

This was a very enjoyable trip and I hope to visit this and the other caves along Rio Tanama on future trips.

LITTLE PRINCESS CONTINUED

Little Princess Mine, Pirates Crack, Gill Mine, Jo Daviess County, IL
August 22, 2002 by Ed Klausner
Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Pat Kambesis, Ed Klausner and Mike Lace

Another hot summer day precluded ridgewalking in Iowa, so we decided to continue mapping Little Princess Mine that we started in June. This cave had been mapped in 1947, but the map was incomplete. Chris had been through a wet section that contained several hundred feet of passage that is not on the original map. The original map is quite good, but we do not have the original survey notes and are therefore forced to resurvey the cave.

On our last trip, we stopped surveying a few hundred feet before a traverse around a pit. At that time, I didn't think I could make the traverse without a handline. I wasn't sorry that on this trip, Mike, Gary and I would survey towards the traverse while Pat and Chris would do the traverse and survey from the end of the dry section towards us. With any luck, they would reach us before I had to attempt the traverse.

After a while of surveying, we heard Pat returning to our section of the cave. She was too short to make the traverse, so she switched places with Mike so he could attempt the traverse. By the way, Chris, who is much taller than any of the rest of us, had no problems. A few hundred feet of survey later, we heard Mike and Chris approaching. Mike was also too short for the traverse and Chris was wet from retrieving his dropped hammer in one of the pools. He had a gash on his hand from an accident several days before and didn't want it to get infected, so he headed out of the cave. Mike continued sketching towards us and we tied the two surveys together and all headed out. In all, we completed 440 feet of survey and have completed the survey up to the traverse. We will have to rig a handline to continue surveying in the future.

While we were waiting for a pot to boil (literally), Pat found and surveyed a small crevice that she named Pirate's Crack. The pot contained some corn that Chris picked from his garden. This was an unusual caving trip snack, but much appreciated.

The next stop was a home of a landowner with a nearby mine. After getting permission, we took a quick look at Gill (sp?) Mine. It had sizable passage and still had track from the mining operations of the 1920's. One very nice feature was the section of calcite rafts. As far as we know, this mine had not been mapped, so we plan on returning to do the survey.

DOMES COMPLEX

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, IA
August 17, 2002 by Ed Klausner
Mark Jones, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace and John Lovaas

Saying that we would be breaking into a dome just wouldn't cut it with this jaded group, so I figured that a "dome complex" would be a bit more of an enticement to get some digging help. Mark was the first to fall, then John. Since that pretty much took all the rest of the available help, Mike had little choice but to join the digging crew. Our objective was a sediment choked side passage just downstream from Dead Coon Passage. Larry Welch pointed this out several months ago. This past June, Larry and I plus some students from the Red Wing Environmental Learning Center started to dig at this lead and made some progress.

With the water level quite low, 0.57 feet at the platform, it was an easy trip to the dig site. Once there, Mike, Mark and John were a little surprised at the potential. They were expecting some small, hopeless dig. The sediment was soft and relatively dry on the surface. Since there is some air movement, the sediment has dried out and some of it could be pushed to the side. We made about 25 feet of progress. For the next 20 or so feet, it appears to be more of the same. After that, who knows, there may actually be a dome complex.

While we were digging, Scott Dankof took his daughters, Rachel and Stephanie, downstream. Surprisingly, they were not interested in helping us with the dig. Pat Kambesis was replacing dye tracing bugs upstream while also measuring the flow at the major side passages. Chris Beck was applying his carpentry wizardry on the roof and by the time we got back to the cabin, he had three new skylights installed. There was so much light in the cabin that it looked like a different place. Mike Nelson and Mickey, meanwhile, were diving the resurgence. They lubricated the lock and took a look on the right hand side for any passages that may have led to what appears to be the former resurgence. All in all, it was a busy weekend at Coldwater.

GANTER CAVE

Ganter Cave, Mammoth Cave National Park, KY

August 31, 2002

by Ed Klausner

Doug Alderman, Cheryl Early, Ed Klausner, John Lovaas, Mike Nardacci and Al Wellhausen

A few months ago, Bob Osburn from the CRF gave me the survey notes from Ganter Cave so I could draft the map. As I plotted the survey line and started to draft the map, I noticed that not only did I have questions on the notes, but there were leads that were never checked.

During the Labor Day CRF expedition, six of us went to Ganter Cave to check leads, clear up questions on the notes, and photograph the cave. Four of the group had been to the cave, John and I had not. It seemed that we had walked too far before heading downhill towards the river, but we were clearly on the trail. Fortunately, we met some trail bikers who said we passed a side trail about a mile back that led towards Fishtrap Hollow. Ganter cave had been closed to park visitors a few years ago and the park tried to obscure the trail leading to the cave. It worked. Once we found the cave, the lock amazingly sprang open once the key was inserted. This may be a first for me.

The plan was for Al and Cheryl to photograph while the rest of us checked leads, surveyed, and cleared up misunderstandings in the survey notes. The entrance room was about 200 feet long and 50 feet wide, but only 4-5 feet high. There were some nice formations, but much of the room was covered by a thin layer of mud. The cave had flooded since the mid 1990's and the survey stations were obliterated. That didn't matter much as the leads were not in this area. After the entrance room, a phreatic tube led off towards a fairly large breakdown room several hundred feet away. John, Doug and Mike surveyed a cut around that was 113 feet long and cleared up two of the leads at once. Al and Cheryl photographed the signatures on the walls while I annotated the survey notes from the previous survey.

The breakdown room contained many passages and a few domes. Al and Cheryl spent the rest of the trip in this vicinity. I don't have a lot of experience with 80-foot domes, but I could get used to them.

The south end of the breakdown room had a short passage that pinched out. John noticed a high lead that he could get to, but would have trouble getting back down. There was good air movement and this is one of four leads that need to be checked on a return visit.

We continued north towards some of the confusing parts of the survey and corrected notes as we went. Two of the leads were tight canyons that will require a few small people. There are several thousand feet of the cave that I still have not drafted, so there will probably be more questions and leads to check.

The trail back to the parking area was not very easy to follow, so we thought it best to get out of the cave ½ hour before it got dark. That was a good plan and we didn't get lost in the woods.

Ganter cave evidently is thought to connect to Bat Cave, which has been surveyed but not drafted. Ganter is about 1.8 miles of surveyed passage and I believe Bat Cave is over 2 miles. That will mean several more trips to Ganter / Bat Cave. I'm looking forward to it as the cave is nicely decorated, interesting, and has a variety of formations and passage types.

