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Scott Dankof

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# INTERCOM

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The Iowa Grotto

September - October 2002  
Volume XXXVIII Issue 5



## I N T E R C O M

Volume 38, Issue 5  
September - October, 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 November 1 and January 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:** Formations in Jewel Cave, South Dakota. Photo by Scott Dankof.



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 5

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IOWA GROTTA MINUTES  
September 25, 2002  
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 8:10 p.m., with 5 members present after a slide show on caves at Isla De Mona. Minutes from the August 28, 2002, meeting were read and approved. A treasurers report was given which showed balances of \$747.68 in the Coldwater fund; \$750.66 in the General fund; and \$147.97 in petty cash.

TRIP REPORTS: Ed Klausner reported on Coldwater weekend where Bill Mulder, Mike Nelson, Mark Roberts and Larry Welch did some survey work in the first right hand passage. Also that weekend, Chris Beck and Mike Lace took a group on a short tour and replace dye bugs. John Lovaas and Elizabeth Miller took flow measurements, water temperature readings, replaced dye bugs and installed temperature data loggers. He continued on a trip to Jones Co. with Gary Engh and Charlie Knight. On another trip, he, Chris B. and Gary E. surveyed two caves in Dubuque Co. He concluded his report on a trip to C.R.F. in Kentucky with John L. and a trip to Tennessee to visit South Pittsburg Pit. FUTURE TRIPS: See the September Hotline and the N.S.S. News for details. Doug Schmucker has been in contact with the Winneshiek Co. Emergency Medical Services for conducting cave rescue training next year. OLD BUSINESS: Volume III 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. NEW BUSINESS: The Intercom deadline is November 1st. Jim Rubel, owner of Crystal Lake Cave has passed away. Nominations for Grotto Officers will be taken starting in October. Elizabeth Miller reported that Dr. Wayne Rowley I.S.U. entomologist has requested assistance with a mosquito sampling project for the West Nile Virus. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m..

IOWA GROTTA MINUTES  
October 22, 2002  
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 8:04 p.m., with 6 members present after a slide show on caves in Iowa. Minutes from the September 25, 2002, meeting were read and approved. A treasurers report was given which showed balances of \$692.68 in the Coldwater fund; \$660.03 in the General fund; and \$147.97 in petty cash.

TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported on Coldwater weekend where John Lovaas worked on Pat's project. Mike L. collected dye bugs upstream. He continued that he and John L. also surveyed a small mechanical cave that weekend. Larry Welch and Mark Jones went through the sumps and surveyed 450 of new passage on the western end of the cave. Charlie Knight dug in Dead Coon passage in Cold Water. Charlie Knight continued to report on a trip to Carroll Cave in Missouri. For more information see [carrollcave.org](http://carrollcave.org) for the web site. Survey work is being done there this month. Ed Klausner reported on a trip with Gary Engh, Chris Beck, Charlie Knight and Jim Roberts where surveyed 6 caves in Fayette Co. Ed continued on a trip to Illinois to Pirates Sand Box with Chris Beck. Ed concluded with a report on surveying a small cave in Winneshiek County with Elizabeth Miller and Hanna Klausner. FUTURE TRIPS: See the October Hotline and the N.S.S. News for details. Doug Schmucker has been in contact with the Winneshiek Co. Emergency Medical Services for conducting cave rescue training next year. Doug Schmucker will also be doing mock rescue at Cold Water Cave sometime in the future. OLD BUSINESS: Volume III 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. Nominations for the Grotto officers will be taken until the December meeting. NEW BUSINESS: The Intercom deadline is November 1st. Tourist Delight's gate will be ready to install this year. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m..

## Editors Note

Some grotto members have put together their own web sites. Reno Lippold has a site at <http://ourworld.cs.com/renolippold>. It has an unedited version of a previous Intercom article that underwent Lowell's swift editing sword. Check it out if you dare. If anyone else has a caving related site, ( preferably without youngstuff.com in the url) let me know and I'll let everyone else know.

## Trip Reports MSS Cornfeed

MSS Cornfeed  
17-18 August  
Foreesteville/Mystery Cave State Park  
Minnesota  
Brad Smith and Liz Robinson

I had to attend a conference in Cedar Falls, Iowa 14-16 August so I decided that since I would be driving I would take my own vehicle and Brad with me. While I was in the conference Brad rode his bike over the many miles of trails that Cedar Falls and Waterloo have to offer. Saturday morning, after my conference was over we left for the MSS cornfeed. Unfortunately due to a Friday night awards dinner, we were unable to leave Friday night in time to get in on any Saturday cave trips. When we arrived all trips were out and everyone who as back was not enthused about going out again. So we decided to go and see Niagara Cave since neither of us had seen it before. Niagara Cave is only about a half-hour or so from the campground. It is family-owned and operated. We got our tickets (yes, they do offer an NSS member discount) and took the tour. The tour was very nice. The cave is well decorated and the guide was good. No canned memorized speeches. The cave has a lot of steps both up and down, so you should be prepared for that situation if you should visit the cave. This is one commercial tour which correctly warns people with heart conditions to seriously consider not going if one is not physically up to the trop. One section, the Grand Canyon was supposed to have 125 feet ceiling at its height. Brad was not sure if this was true. We were unable to find independent cave confirmation of this. There were lots of little fossils in the walls that the guide pointed out. After our cave trip we headed back to camp for dinner. They had some poems and cave ballads for entertainment as well as a fake radio play about hodags performed by selected MSS attendees. Some of it included inside jokes, which Brad and I did not get. After the entertainment they gave a prize and an interminably long auction that ended almost midnight. We left the next morning since we had to get back to get work done before leaving for OTR.

## Another OTR Trip Report

Old Timers Reunion  
Dailey, West Virginia  
28 August-2 September  
Brad Smith and Liz Robinson and over 2100 other people

We arrived at Old Timers Reunion (OTR) on Sunday after a weekend at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum. Since we work the Sauna crew we were allowed to help out. Brad does detail very well, looking for those fine points that need to be taken care of. I work river crew as well as little things that I can do having no construction skills. I also took a couple of terms on the pre-OTR gate crew. OTR has had some site improvements. There is a new improved telephone booth with four working phones in an outdoor setting. The water for the shower is heated with gas, which is a much more reliable system. Showers remained operational until Tuesday



after OTR, which allowed the cleanup crew time to cleanup themselves. Our picnic table had been moved from registration down to the med area and we found someone who could bring it back to our tents. There was heavy rain prior to OTR, but in a rare move, Weather Central had no rain for the entire event although one day had a prediction of 100% chance of rain. Weather was generally good although there were a few hot days. Nights were ideal except for astronomical observing. I hope it will be better next year when Mars is the closest to Earth that it will be for the next 200 years. I also hope the telescope man will be there with his giant scope and the sky will be clear. Friday night was the toga party. I had gotten some sheets for Brad and I to make into togas. People walked around in togas that night. Each night had a live band with a different kind of music, instead of recorded music on the last night. I worked registration, mostly data input, but I did spend some time at the registration tables. Both Brad and I worked midnight to 3 a.m., for Babylon 5 fans, Midnight on the firing line. Brad was in the DooDah Parade playing his didgereedoo. He did not win a prize, but he had fun. He was also in the 5K fun run. He got started 30 seconds late, so he did not win anything this year. He won overall last year. On the last night the hot tubs turned a hot magenta. It turned out that some teenagers had on some hair dye that dissolved and came off in the water. I got some on my fingernails and it took a while to get off, and other people also turned pink. We stayed to help with the sauna take down on Monday and packed up and left Tuesday. The rest of the sauna will be taken down on October work weekend. Next year is a new OTR chair and it will be my COOT (Certified Original Old Timer) year. Then there are the ROOTs (Real Original Old Timers), with 40 years as opposed to 20. I will be long in the tooth if I reach that stage.

#### MVOR

MVOR 18-20 October 2002

Shannon County, MO, The Sinks

Lots of people, including Brad Smith and Liz Robinson

Brad and I arrived at the MVOR campsite Friday evening and found a space to park the truck. It had been raining, however unlike the Spring MVOR, we were able to park inside the campground since there was very little mud. Trip sign-up was not scheduled until the next morning. I signed up for a springs tour. The tour was led by a local caver and geologist, Jo Schaper, who has been studying the springs since she was a child. She will be getting her degree in geology this winter. Brad signed up for a cave trip to Round Springs Cave that was to start at 2:00 p.m. that afternoon. I signed up for it also. Since we were together in the truck, which was our campsite, there would be no problem if we started out with the spring tour and then left it early to join the cave tour. Neither of us would come back alone to a missing campsite. The first spring that we visited was Round Spring. Round Spring is on National Park land. It is 55 feet deep and a lovely turquoise color. There was a legend of a local who had been driving a cart near the edge of the spring and fell in but managed to swim to the top and save himself. The park service poo-pooed it as another local legend until divers found the cartwheels in the spring. As one would expect the spring is a nice round shape with the stream coming out of it. The town of Eminence used to be located at the edge of the spring. It was moved around the time of the Civil War to its present location South of the Sinks. The second spring we visited was Blue Spring. Blue Spring was an even deeper blue than Round Spring. It is over 300 feet deep Approximately 1300 feet in passage has been mapped in it. We watched a muskrat swim across it at a place underneath the rocks at the edge of the pool. At this point we left the spring tour and went for the cave tour at Round Spring Cave. A special tour for MVOR participants had been arranged with the National Park Service since the cave was now closed to the public until the summer. This cave has been a show cave for some time but it has never been lit by electric lights. You might say the cave is "minimally processed" as a show cave. The entry passage has some metal grates on the floor and there are some artificial stone steps but the tour is gravel. The entry passage involves some stoop walking until one gets into a large room. Overall, the cave is beautifully decorated with lots of drapery, helectites,



stalactites, columns, and interesting speleothems. Our tour guide did not point out many fossils, although I would not doubt they were there. After all it is limestone! He pointed out a Keene's bat and a gray bat hanging up on the walls. We also got squeaked at by a bat unknown. There was some large guano piles that had been made by a maternity colony of gray bats. Further back in the cave are piles of guano from a non-maternity colony. Unfortunately, when the gates on the cave were installed the gray bat maternity colony left. There are still bachelor and barren female bats that use the cave. Indiana bats use it in the winter, although in the summer they prefer to live in trees. We also visited areas of the cave where the large formations had fallen from the cave ceiling. This was due to the inability of the formations to hold onto a sandstone cap, as well possibly of earthquake activity. There was another part of the cave that was poorly decorated and geologists are still debating as to why. At the very back there was a very nice little waterfall that was to be more heard than seen, the water being transparent in the light of cave lights. This involved going back a bit further in the trip than most tours to the public are allowed. After the cave tour Brad and I went to the last spring, Alley Spring. This spring was the shallowest, at only about 35 feet. It was turquoise in color, but more milky in appearance. It was larger in size than Round Spring and had a nice trail around it. It was beside an old mill. The water that came out of the spring had lots of watercress growing in it. We tasted a bit of it. It reminded me of my childhood when my mother used to put watercress in salads. This weekend, 23 October, my sister told me about visiting this spring many long years ago on her family vacation. It was in August then, and they were able to get permission to take a dip in the creeks nearby the mill, not in the spring itself, of course. Brad and I did not get back in time for the guest speaker. We got there in time only for the door prizes, but didn't win any this time. We left the next morning, not having time for any other trips because of the long drive back. The MVOR business meeting was scheduled for Sunday morning. Not being interested in speleo-politics enough to leave that late and get home ridiculously late, we did not plan to stay, nor did we stay. For equipment News, Petzl has a new duo available after 1 November, from IMO. It has a halogen light on one side and a 3 LED pack on the other side. At \$50 that is a reasonably affordable light for a duo with LEDs and halogens. IMO also has a new carbide lamp made in India that looks rather substantial. We will be looking into getting these when they come out with parabolic reflectors. I did not see either of these at the OTR vendors row so I assume they are really new. The next MVOR will be the last weekend in April. I am sure more details will be coming out on that next year. It will be in Missouri some place.

#### Brookfield Zoo

Brookfield Zoo, Brookfield, IL  
Brad Smith and Liz Robinson  
26 October 2002

by Liz Robinson

I had to help take care of my 94 year old mother while her regular caretaker went on a vacation. After her return Brad and I stayed for the rest of the weekend and we decided to go to the zoo and visit the bats. The zoo has a regular Boo at the Zoo party for kids. The first place we went was to the Rodrigues Fruitbat colony in the Australia exhibit. Although they are from islands off the coast of Africa, not Australia they are housed in this building. These are large fruitbats that fly freely around the exhibit. One even crossed the tourist walk to hide in a corner above the trail. There were several other individuals in a cage in the middle of the exhibit and we wondered if they were new members of the colony that were being introduced, or if they were very young bats being protected from their elders. The Seacoast exhibits are vampire bats that feed on sea lions and seals. This colony was rather small but one could see them both walking and flying around. The Fragile Desert had some insect eating bats hanging up on the wall of their fake cave. The Swamp exhibit had a big brown bat in a fake cave. It too was hanging up sleeping. This bat did not seem to have a lot of flight room. The rain forest exhibit had some more Rodrigues Fruitbats in it, including one that seemed to be very friendly, and kept sticking its head out between the spaces in the chicken wire. It was as though it wanted to be touched. That was tempting enough but we



decided we would like to ask a keeper in a subsequent visit about this bat. Others in the exhibit were just hanging around. It was very nice to see so many bat exhibits in the zoo, however there were very few items in the gift shop of a batty nature and I pointed this out to the store clerk. All in all it was a pleasant day. There had been a talk on the fruitbats at 10:45 that morning, but we were unable to leave early enough to get there. We were waiting for an important phone call until around 10:30, and we did not know about the talk until we got there.

#### BLUE PITS

Little Blue Pit, Fledermaus Cave, Dubuque County, IA  
Over the Tunnel Cave, Jo Daviess County, IL  
8 September 2002  
Chris Beck, Gary Engh and Ed Klausner

by Ed Klausner

Earlier this summer, we had a choice between hiking to a cave entrance in Dubuque County when the temperatures were in the mid 90's or driving to a cave entrance in Illinois. At that time, we chose the Illinois cave. This past weekend, we chose both. Gary and I met Chris in the Dubuque area and checked with a landowner before hiking to a ridge with several unsurveyed blind pits. On the way, we saw both a Little Blue Heron and a Great Blue Heron and thus had names for the pits.

Little Blue Pit was 36 feet deep and relatively easy to sketch, as there was no horizontal passage. It only took one survey shot. Close by was the second pit. Like the first pit, I dropped down to sketch while Chris and Gary waited on top. There was a 2-foot high hole on the side of the bottom that looked like it might lead to some passage. It turned out that the passage was forked and the left side was 20 to 25 feet long. I called up to Chris to come down and help me survey. While he was coming down, I looked at the right fork. I found about 80 feet of passage before being stopped by a pit that I couldn't cross. There were nice high ceilings (about 11 feet) and some rail marks from mining activity. In a while both Chris and Gary were down. It turns out that this is not Big Blue Pit but Fledermaus Cave, which had already been surveyed. It took Chris and Gary a while to figure that out because the entrance looked different and there were lots of bats on their last visit. Chris searched the area around Fledermaus but could not locate the second blind pit in the area, so we headed off to Illinois to survey a cave that Chris knew.

We had attempted to locate this Illinois cave once before, but hadn't found it. Chris got better directions this time and we had no trouble. The entrance was 35 feet up a steep cliff face. Chris climbed to the entrance while Gary belayed him. Chris then anchored a static rope that Gary and I used to reach the entrance. It was Chris' turn to sketch. Over the Tunnel Cave was surveyed in two shots and was 101 feet long. There were some small formations in the back that were active. The rest of the cave was dry with a sandy floor. The relatively straight passage was a few feet wide and tall enough to stoopwalk. Since the day was so warm, it felt good to be in the coolness of the cave.

#### PITTING

South Pittsburgh Pit, South Pittsburgh, TN  
2 September 2002  
Pat Kambesis, Ed Klausner, and John Lovaas

by Ed Klausner

John and I managed to talk Pat into another day of caving after the Labor Day CRF expedition. TAG was on our minds and we headed south with 200 feet of rope. After a bit of searching through books and notes, Pat thought we could find and rig South Pittsburgh Pit owned by the SCC (Southeastern Cave Conservancy.) The entrance pit is 165 feet deep.

South Pittsburgh is in southern Tennessee. When we drove into town, there were dozens of banners depicting the school mascot - a pirate. This seemed fitting to us.

We had little trouble locating the pit, but the rigging was a bit of a problem. There wasn't a good anchor at the edge of the pit and we didn't have much rope to spare. The closest good anchor was 30 or so feet up a steep slope and this used most of our rope. We used webbing to create a backup anchor and another piece to redirect the rope away from a large rock. John went down first and watched the rope as he got off. He wanted to be sure that the rope didn't stretch a bit on the way down and then spring back so we couldn't reach it when we were ready to climb back out. That wasn't the case and we did some exploring when all three of us were on the bottom.

The natural light provided by the opening above was quite nice, but didn't penetrate very far down the major side passage. A few hundred feet from the bottom of the pit, there was a 25-foot climb. It was rigged, but we didn't know the history of the rope so we didn't attempt it. There were a few small passages that we did explore until we got cold and decided to start climbing out. John again went first. When Pat climbed out, she spent some time looking at a middle level opening in the dome that she thought led to a dome complex. I looked on my way up and thought it would be awfully difficult to reach. We would either have to pendulum over or start from the bottom and bolt our way up since the walls curved in towards the entrance. In any case, South Pittsburgh Pit is really nice, and we are planning a return trip to see the rest of the cave.

Dear Most Competent Caver

Dear Most Competent Caver,

I tend to think of myself as consummate cave photographer. After years of honing my skills, I have graduated to the \$2.00 point and shoot model. For years I've entered contests and have yet to win an award. Titles of my best shots are as follows: Illusions of Fog, The Featureless Room, and What's Focus?. People don't seem to respond to my work. What could be my problem?

Disposable Camera Pro

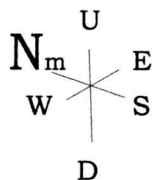
Dear Disposable Pro,

Oh, I think people respond to your work, just not in the way your looking for. My suggestion is to have more human subjects in your photos. I call them minions. It's best if you pose them in an interesting way. I always like the water up to the nose look. Tell them to stay very still, then pretend your having camera trouble. The ensuing reaction makes a great candid shot. Just make sure you can dodge any mud balls and rocks that are hurled your way. I find a telephoto lens very valuable for this type of photography. I'm sure they make them for the \$2.00 point and shoot model that you use.

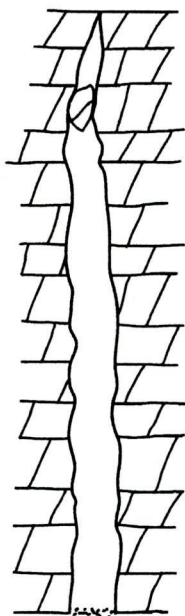
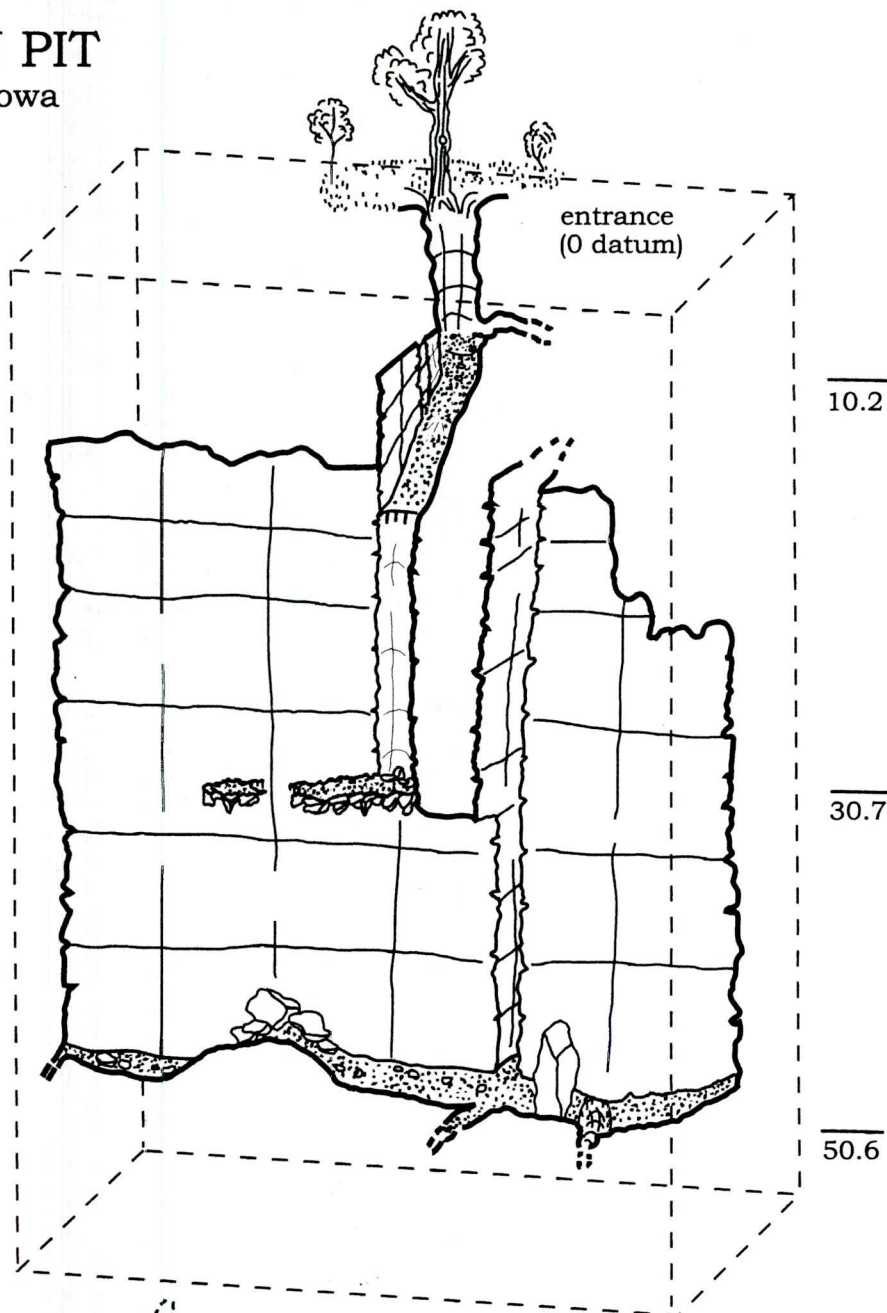


# REDEMPTION PIT

Clayton County, Iowa

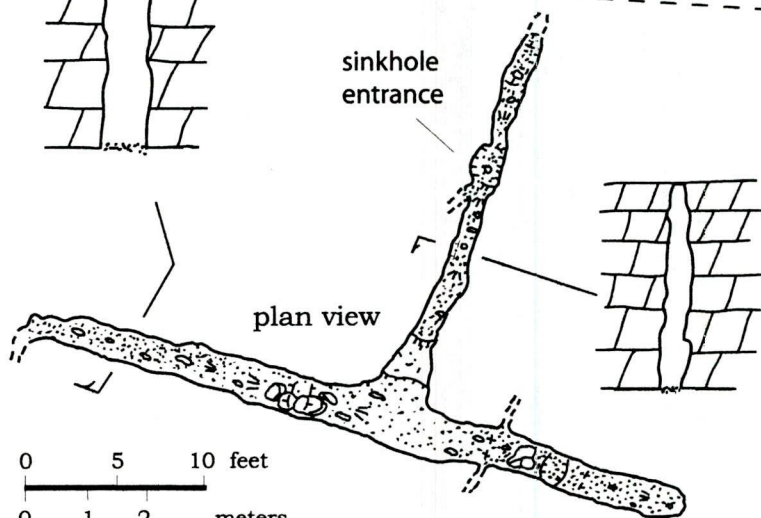


prospective view



sinkhole  
entrance

plan view



Suunto compass, clino  
and tape survey by:  
Pat Kambesis  
Ed Klausner  
Mike Lace  
April 2001

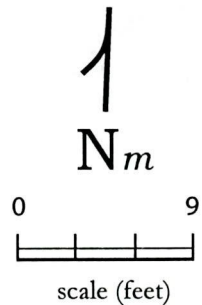
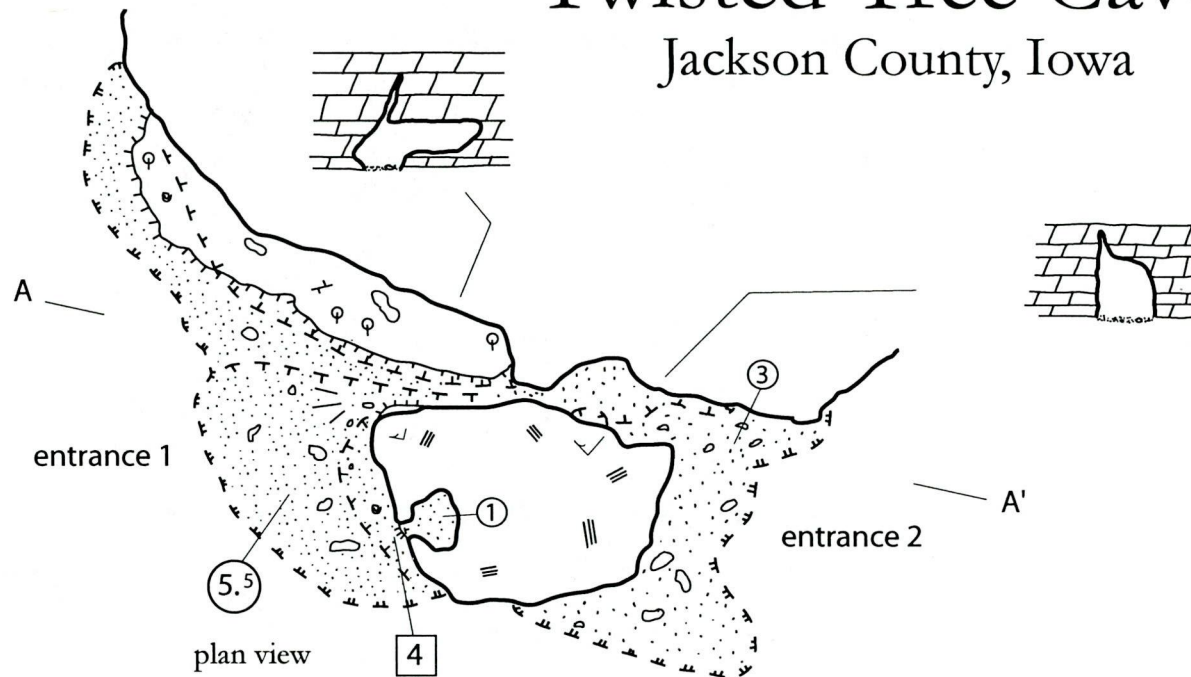


surveyed length = 106.4 feet (32.4 meters)  
vertical extent = 50.6 feet (15.4 meters)

Klausner 2001

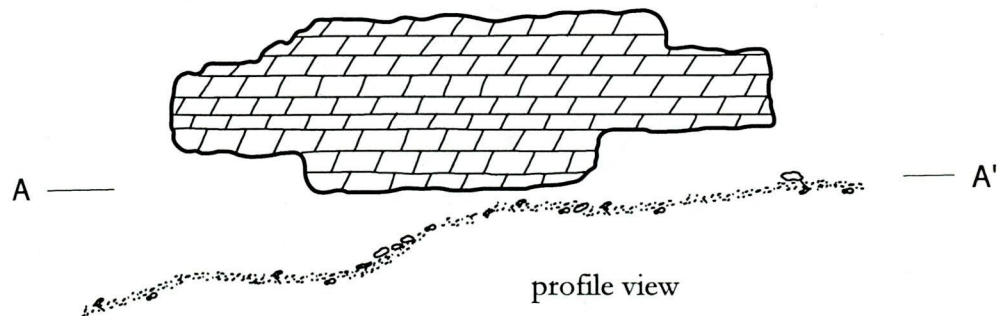
# Twisted Tree Cave

Jackson County, Iowa



Suunto and tape survey  
9/23/2001 by  
Iowa Grotto Members:  
Gary Engh and  
Ed Klausner

total surveyed length = 31.6 feet (9.6 meters)



Klausner 2001



