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Scott Dankof

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Cover Photo: Cueva L'arco, Puerto Rico. Dave Bunnell in foreground.
Photo by: Mike Lace



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

Chairman - - - - - Mike Lace
Vice Chairman - - - - Ed Klausner
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Volume 39

Issue 1

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IOWA GROTTA MINUTES
January 22, 2003
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by chairman Mike Lace at 8:00 p.m., with 8 members and one guest, John Kirk, present after a slide show on caves of the Puerto Rican mainland. Minutes from the December 11, 2002, meeting were read and approved. A treasurers report was given which showed balances of \$686.07 in the Coldwater fund; \$363.76 in the General fund; and \$147.97 in petty cash. TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported on his recent trip to Puerto Rico with Chris Beck, Dave Bunnell, Pat Kambesis, John Lovaas and several others. Ed Klausner reported on a December 2002 trip to Coldwater Cave with Mark Jones and Larry Welch to the nasty sump. Ed then reported on the mosquito collecting trips to various county caves with Elizabeth Miller. She will be providing a report at the February meeting. FUTURE TRIPS: See the January Hotline and the N.S.S. News for details. Doug Schmuecker will also be doing mock rescue at Cold Water Cave in the future, and a vertical training session this spring. OLD BUSINESS: The annual report has been filed with the N.S.S. 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 March 1st.. There was brief discussion on increasing Grotto revenues, as well as on where to hold the annual picnic. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m..

IOWA GROTTA MINUTES
February 26, 2003
Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by chairman Mike Lace at 8:32 p.m., with 11 members and one guest, Mike Bounk, present after a slide show on caves of Iowa, Illinois and Kentucky. Minutes from the January 22, 2003, meeting were read and approved. A treasurers report was given which showed balances of \$686.07 in the Coldwater fund; \$290.94 in the General fund; and \$147.97 in petty cash. Dr. Elizabeth Miller then gave a presentation on the collection of Mosquito's for a study by Iowa State University, Professor Wayne Rowley, on the West Nile virus. Specifically, the collection of these insects from Iowa caves will hopefully provide information on whether or not these overwintering populations are harboring the West Nile virus. She explained the annual West Nile virus cycle, including the amplification cycle in avian species, and the speculative portion of the cycle for which she is providing assistance. She discussed the various diseases carried by mosquitos in Iowa (Western, St. Louis and Equine encephalitises), and that this bloodborne virus can be carried by 36 different species of mosquito. Mosquito population samples have been collected from Clinton, Fayette, Jackson and Jones County as of this date. Additional sampling will be preformed yet this winter from additional Iowa counties. She then discussed limitations in the sampling procedure, and demonstrated the sampling device and her technique. Following her excellent presentation, Dr. Miller answered a number of questions from meeting attendants. TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported that an additional 320 feet of new passage has been surveyed at Coldwater Cave since the January meeting. In attendance on this surveying trip were Ed Klausner, John Lovaas and himself. Ed Klausner reported on trips with Chris Beck and Gary Engh to Jones County where 16 new caves have been surveyed this year. He continued his report on two C.R.F. trips to Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. John Lovaas was in attendance for one of the trips. Greg McCarty reported on a trip he and Deb took to western Fayette County, where, with a landowners son, they visited a sinkhole. He explained that using vertical gear he descended 20 feet to the bottom of the vertical sink, where he observed horizontal passage for an estimated 20 feet. A return trip will be needed as access was prevented by frozen conditions. FUTURE TRIPS: See the February Hotline and the

N.S.S. News for details. Doug Schmucker will also be doing mock rescue at Cold Water Cave in the future, and a vertical training session this April. Contact Doug if interested. 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. Doug Schmucker has given two caves rescue presentations to emergency rescue members. The annual picnic was discussed. Dutton's Cave County Park, Fayette County, will be the likely site for this years picnic, the first weekend in August. NEW BUSINESS: The Intercom deadline is March 1st.. Mike Bounk, research geologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, provided the Grotto with two GIS maps of Coldwater Cave. One will be on display at Coldwater Cave and the other placed into the Grotto library. Greg McCarty reported that one of the Grotto's first members, Bill Alternader, has passed away. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m..

Rookie Falls

Chris Poe and Scott Dankof
Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, IA
January 18, 2003

by Chris Poe

On a previous trip to Sullivan Cave, with Larry Welch, I was bitten by the photography bug. Scott Dankof's reputation for knowing his photography is deserved. When the opportunity to learn from a pro happened, it intrigued me. This trip was my second to Coldwater, perhaps my sixth or seventh overall. For this trip, Scott and I elected to hit the Cascade area.

The water level was somewhere near 0.40 and 0.42. We proceeded downstream and talked photography. Among the numerous lessons learned were: a) Do a study of f-stops vs. flash setups vs. shutter speeds vs. distance vs. angles and keep track of your setups and then see how the actual images work out. b) Coldwater in particular really sucks up the light c) the hard-to-find magnesium one-use flash units end up throwing out a ton of light, worth getting. d) Good composition in an image is more than just planting a body and some light. Different angles, and different croppings tell different stories.

We shot three or four images of the cascades area, using the ever-popular "ghost" (one flash, multiple exposures in different flash locations) technique. I'm calling this essay "Rookie Falls" in reference to a) my rookie status b) the cascade area, and c) the unfortunate bit where I fell on my butt (and managed to get his flash unit wet) in an area of very loose silt. It was one of the most ungraceful falls on record, which for me is saying a lot.

I also went upstream for about 200 feet in the Cascade side passage. It's not the easiest crawl, especially since I hadn't adequately duct taped my kneepads. But it was beautiful, and there are definite possibilities of getting some good images out of that area. I'll be back.

This trip was not memorable for its endurance, nor for it's exploration of virgin cave, nor for miles of survey. But I dare say it was memorable for the information gleaned from Scott, and the good company of all who shared the cabin. Thanks you guys.

One More Day In Paradise
or
A Page From A Rum Diary

By John Lovass

It was a warm Saturday evening in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The endemic tree

frogs(the 'coqui')sang their constant refrain. The mosquitos paid little attention to me that evening; the excellent Barrilitos rum may have hindered their navigational skills. To collect mosquito bites in January is a rare privilege indeed; one must go to The Tropics. The fine rum takes one's mind off of the bites. Lounging in a lawn chair in front of Mimi Ortiz's townhouse, I prepared to call my taxi service in Illinois. I was flying home from 12 days of caving and fun in Puerto Rico.

Sitting in that comfortable chair, reviewing my ticket receipt, a horrible fact came to light; I was not returning to Illinois until Monday! My return flight was NOT Sunday evening, as I had planned. How did such a mistake come into fruition? It mattered not. Ye Gods; I had to spend another day in this, this- Paradise.

I alerted our hosts, Mimi and Umberto, and the sole remaining member of the expedition, Dave Bunnell, the next morning as to my buffoonery; and to ways that we could best take advantage of my additional time there.

We had originally planned on visiting El Yunque, a national park southeast of San Juan, on the eastern part of the island. Beautiful jungle, waterfalls, and volcanics, and a short drive back to San Juan in time for me to catch my Sunday evening flight. But my Sunday departure was not to be. So what to do? Well, there was Sorbetos. Spanish for 'sodastraws'. And the name of a cave. In Puerto Rico. In the karst. That's all you need to know about the location, for reasons you will soon learn. If you weren't fluent in Spanish, you might think it meant 'sorbet', and when you tried to order a sorbet at a restaurant, and they brought you a straw, and you wondered what the hell is kind of crappy service is this, and ugliness ensues...

But we are in Puerto Rico, and we know Sorbetos means Sodastraws; lots of sodastraws. An infinity of sodastraws. Sorbetos was now within our reach.

We had looked for Sorbetos on two separate days during the expedition. A lot of time spent(or wasted?) to look for a cave, when there was much to survey in other caves on the island. But we allotted one day, at first, to look for Sorbetos. Our first attempt required a little river crossing, a little climbing, and a little bushwhacking- yielding no entrance. We had a dam as a landmark; did we have the right dam? Did we even go to the right town? The directions seemed simple enough; received via my cell phone, easily committed to memory while driving down the autopista at 90 mph. What could I have misunderstood?

That day was saved by a fine lunch and a survey/photo trip to Los Chorros, a cave whose dual waterfall/resurgence entrances were high in a bluff face. Dave Bunnell did some (as usual)fine photography, and Mike Lace and Joyce Hoffmaster racked up some fine survey in a previously unmapped part of the cave. One doesn't see much unmapped walking passage in the States, but in Puerto Rico, there's bigger stuff than walking passage that needs to be surveyed. So one can ignore the walking passage-sized side leads as secondary. I guess.

Then there was the second day trip to locate the cave. Perhaps we didn't go far enough. Or did we go too far? While Mike Lace and Chris Beck bushwhacked along the riverbank where the cave entrance should have been located, Dave Bunnell and myself swam up river, enjoying the water and scoping out the fantastic travertine formations along the river bluffs. A small cave, choked with formations taller than me, was located and provisionally name John's Cave.

Some photos were taken of the cave, as well as the travertine formations along the river; Dave Bunnell, lacking a camera, was conscripted into photo model service. A rare event indeed.

After giving up hope of finding the cave entrance that day, I decided to drive through town, thinking there might be another road for us to follow. A narrow lane wound up the side of the hill the town was perched on; among the sights was a mid-1930s Bugatti; how this Italian sports car ended up in a small village in Puerto Rico, one may never know. But the story is a good one, to be sure.

As we came to the end of the 'high road', we made an interesting discovery, dueling landmarks! We had been told by Mimi to look for the 'plant' on our way to Sorbetos. On the first day, we had parked by an abandoned electric plant by the river. Here, we discovered an operating water pumping plant. Hmmm..., the mystery deepened.

We did enjoy some fine pinchos on the way back to San Juan that day. Pinchos are a ubiquitous meat snack in Puerto Rico, simple meat or seafood skewers, with a piece of french style bread on the end to deal with the sometimes fiery sauce that

covers the entree. A good deal, and the most common 'microbusiness' one sees on the island. I wonder whether I could float a pincho cart franchise here in the States. So while pinchos were located and consumed on that second trip, no significant cave resources were located and enjoyed.

As the reader can imagine, Dave and I were going to find Sorbetos on this last day if we had to hitchhike out to the karst. Of course, Mimi and Umberto were more than willing to take us there. Just to show us how easy it was to find. Just to show us gringos- we, the pendejos punetas gringos cabrones- that we were simply incapable of following the simplest of directions. Fair enough. Dave and I secretly hoped that the entrance had been sealed shut by a horrific rain event, just as the entrance had been initially exposed after a hurricane. And thus our dignity restored.

So, off we went, that Sunday morning. It was a pleasant drive out to the karst, in Mimi's Acura. Dave and myself in the back, Dave wedged just so to give himself some headroom. Umberto driving, with Mimi and Parcha riding shotgun. Parcha? Yes, Parcha- Mimi's Golden Retriever. Parcha has many unique skills, not the least of which is that she is a competent caver.

We rolled on down the road, discussing sex, politics, religion, and taxes in Puerto Rico. Lest anyone begrudge residents of the Enchanted Isle for not paying Federal income tax, be reminded that there are ample local, municipal, corporate and import taxes to cover the expenses that Federal moneys would otherwise provide for. And lest we forget the tolls on the autopista; driving the expressways around Chicago is a bargain compared to Puerto Rico's gauntlet of tollbooths. There Is No Free Ride. We exited the autopista, and headed into the karst- the same route we had done 2 times previously. So far, so good! We took the side road into the town we had started our adventures from previously, and Mimi had Umberto stop, as she spoke with some residents lounging on their porch.

Having gotten her own confirmation of which route through town was best, she took a seat on the window ledge of the car door, and Umberto drove up into town. It was quite a scene- Mimi sitting on the car door like a homecoming queen, waving and chatting with locals as we crawled up the narrow lane that rose up through the town, and Umberto blowing on a train whistle as we negotiated the many blind curves.

We reached the water plant, and were once again reminded of our buffoonery by Mimi; not the first time, and not the last time. We continued on past the plant, spying the Bugatti again(a '35 or '36 Diablo, says Umberto), and came to a locked gate at the end of the lane.

As we parked in the narrow lane and began to unload our gear, a gentleman in a pickup pulls behind us. He is the owner of a farm, that lies beyond the locked gate- his gate. He and Mimi discuss the cave; the farmer is depressed by the amount of damage that Cueva Sorbetos has suffered. Dave is crestfallen; he fears the cave has been stripped. I try to put a brave face on things; at least the damage should be documented.

The farmer gives us leave to drive further down the lane, so that we end up parking a short distance from the entrance. The lane we drove down had been reconnoitered by several members of our party on our past visits, myself included. What did we fail to do? We just didn't go far enough. A bit of Dave Bunnell's wisdom that held true yet again. When we searched for the Sorbetos entrance the first two times, we knew the cave was just upstream of a dam. Well, we had two dams. The area above the first had been reconnoitered extensively, I'd say. The second dam? Well, it was noted and documented. In fact, Dave even photographed the second dam and showed the pictures to Mimi, and to Norman Veve, a true patriarch of Puerto Rican caving, and a fellow BMW motorcycle enthusiast as well; not an easy task on an island, parts are easier to find than insurance in Puerto Rico. When you ride a motorcycle in the Carribean, you truly are taking your life in your hands. And no insurance company is interested in the bet.

But we must go back to that second dam for a moment. Mimi and Norman studied Dave's photos, and no- that dam doesn't look familiar, must be the wrong dam, etcetera. But here now was that second dam in front of us. And Mimi berating us for our colossal inability to find such an obvious landmark. Dave pointed out that he had photographed this dam and shown it to Mimi and Norman. Mimi took no note of this comment. We, the stupid gringos, followed sheepishly along.

Now, all Dave and I had to do was follow Mimi. We hiked up past the dam

several hundred feet (as we had been initially instructed), looked over on the opposite bank (like we had been initially instructed), and there it was- a 3' square metal door in a cement barrier blocking the cave entrance. Oh well. So much for hurricane activity obliterating the entrance.

A quick swim across the river, and we were at the entrance. Puerto Rican cavers had fabricated the gate several years ago, but vandals had chipped away at the base of the concrete barrier, creating a small crawlway. Opening the gate was unnecessary.

Entering the first room, things didn't look too good. Maybe 8' high, and about 30' across, the ceiling area at the entrance appeared to have been completely covered by sodastraws at some point, but no longer. The ceiling was devoid of formations. After less than 100', an amazing thing happened; formations began to appear! Dense clusters of 12-24" sodastraws clung to the ceiling area near the sides of the passage. Many seemed to be within reach, but yet no vandals had touched them. A very good sign indeed.

Another interesting observation was that the cave seemed to be just under the level of the river outside. Without having a profile view of the cave, I can't confirm this. But as soon as you enter the cave, you lose a significant bit of elevation, and the water in the cave flows away from the river, draining into a short gravel-filled lower passage. Moving water can be heard below the gravel fill. Enticing.

Then we came upon one of the many beautiful sights of the day - a stooping walkway, perhaps 50' long, with a ceiling filled with clear white sodastraws, perhaps 2' long. Stunning, and intimidating; the floor of the passage is very muddy, and a slip might cause oneself to flail around a bit, causing horrific damage. But all traveled through safely, and the first 'money shot' location was chosen. We continued on through a large area of muddy breakdown; it was sporting for us, and most sporting for Parcha. She will attempt to climb anywhere Mimi goes, but she does need assistance at times. After all, she doesn't have opposable thumbs like we do.

We reached the terminal room in the cave, which was quite large; perhaps a 30' ceiling height, perhaps 100' across. On one side, the water drained to the tantalizing lower passage.

Water in the cave does not drain to the river, but to a drain in the back of the cave. After entering a tube, the water descends through a gravel bed at the end of the crawlway. Water can be heard flowing below the level. Sweet.

An upper level, high on some breakdown, occupied the other side. Mimi assured us that there were many beautiful formations in the upper level. So off we went, Dave and Umberto and I. Mimi stayed with Parcha below, as the breakdown pile was quite steep and muddy. Reaching the top, we began searching for 'carrot' formations amongst the many fine helictite-coated sodastraws in our vicinity.

We didn't locate any 'carrot' colored formations in the upper level room, but it was quite beautiful, nevertheless! Spectacular white calcite formations abounded everywhere. Umberto took Mimi's place as dogsitter, and Dave took some photos in the area.

After packing up from the first photo stop, we headed back towards the entrance. Seeing another upper level breakdown room to our left, we ventured up the slope. Now we had found the carrot colored formations. A spectacular array of formations filled the ceiling and floor of this breakdown area. The lion's share of the helictites were almost perfectly clear, flowstone was pure white. Here and there deep orange stalactites hung, tucked between the many clear and white formations. Most striking, indeed.

Now here was a place for good photos. We spent perhaps several hours in this area taking photos, and there was still more to do. A day could be spent shooting in this area. We nowhere near exhausted the photographic possibilities in this area. On our way out, we stopped for one more photo shoot, in the sodastraw-filled stoopway. Again, a place of great beauty, even with the cumulative damage from careless visitors.

Dave used up the last of his film in this area, so our shooting day was done. We arrived at the entrance, and donned our PFDs for our river crossing. Parcha even had her own canine PFD, designed for SAR dogs. She seemed to enjoy it immensely.

There was a beautiful twilight as we exited the cave; in the deep canyon, the midnight blue of the sky was striking. The river water was in the 70s, so one could

enjoy the water and clean up all at the same time. Very nice indeed.

We hiked back to the car under a bright moon, changed into clean clothes, and drove back down through town. After stopping at a bar for some refreshments for the ride home, Mimi sang traditional songs as we cruised along the autopista.

Our final stop was for Fuentes' barbecue chicken, a popular spot in San Juan. A large restaurant with tile floors and many tables, one can order carryout at a counter. When you order your chicken, a whole cooked chicken is removed from the roaster and flayed into small pieces with a machete. Absolutely stunning to watch. Fried plantains, and mofongo with soup, were side items for us that evening. Mofongo, by the way, is a dish prepared with meat, or seafood, and plantains. The ingredients are pounded into a cake form. One can drop the whole cake into the soup, a Caribbean won ton.

Retreating back to Mimi's place, we devoured our meal, and then reviewed the day's shoot on Dave's computer. One of the greatest benefits of digital photography is the ability to review one's work on the spot. Lighting can be corrected, models repositioned; a great benefit indeed.

And thus ended a beautiful day of caving in a most unique and beautiful cave, in a most unique and beautiful place. I hope that Sorbetos will be protected from future vandalism. It is truly a national treasure.

Henry's and Albert's Domes

Mammoth Cave, KY

15 February 2003

Charles Fox, Scott House, Ed Klausner and Gary Holbrook

16 February 2003

Bob Hall, Bob Hoke, Ed Klausner, Mark Miller, and Peter Zabrok

by Ed Klausner

I had been lucky for the last few years by encountering good weather for the February CRF expedition to Mammoth Cave. I was not as lucky this year. On Saturday, I had hoped to visit Ganter Cave on the north shore of the Green River and check some of the remaining leads. We encountered an ice storm and plans for the weekend had to be changed as the ferry across the Green River was not running and Ganter Cave was likely flooded near the entrance.

I had planned on visiting the Albert's Domes area of Mammoth on Sunday with Scott House so he could show me the route as I was given the section of cave to draft. We decided to go on Saturday instead and hope that the storm would pass so we could get to Ganter Cave the following day.

We had the usual key problems and finally got one that worked. Not only could we get in the gate, but also get out at the end of the trip. The route took us down the Historic section to the Giant's Coffin and then down a trail to Ganter Avenue. Ganter Avenue has lots of archaeological significance. There are tools, reed torches, paleo-feces, and other artifacts that are thousands of years old. Going was slow in this section so the artifacts wouldn't be disturbed. Ganter Avenue and Welcome Avenue were modified by owners of the cave to allow access to the new section when the Echo River was too high for tourists to go through on boats. There are stone steps in several places and signatures from the 1800's and early 1900's on the walls. At Rider Haggard's Flight, there is a flight of stone steps that must have taken quite a while to construct. We found scraps of newspaper with dates in the 1800's and other artifacts from the workers and tourists of the time.

At the bottom of Rider Haggard's Flight, we ducked under a ledge and continued down Mayfield Avenue, past a signature from Ed Bishop (1889), great nephew of Stephen Bishop. Mayfield Avenue continued on to Henry's Dome. Henry's Dome is huge - about 100 feet high and 60 or so feet wide. It was difficult to see much of it due to its size. We came in at a middle level. There are passages that enter the dome at both higher and lower levels.

We crossed some breakdown and entered Elmore's Pass. This canyon passage led to the start of Albert's Domes. Albert was the husband of Violet, daughter of one of the park trustees. Violet had an entrance named after her (Violet City Entrance)

and that area can be seen on the lantern tour. Albert's Domes are a series of domes that we could not actually reach due to the volume of water entering the area from the ongoing storm. We got close enough to be impressed with the volume of water falling in the first of the domes.

The next day presented a problem. The weather had deteriorated and the ferry was still not operating. The expedition leader decided to send me back to Albert's Domes with a different group of people to see if I could find the route and not get lost. The area is not overly complicated and we got to Henry's Dome in good time. We also went down Welcome Avenue a few dozen stations. This is another passage that was made "tourist ready" in case the Echo River was too high for boat traffic. One end of Welcome Avenue is at the base of Rider Haggard's Flight. This is also the start of Mayfield Avenue.

Lee's Way was a high, side passage that we again followed for a short distance. It started out as a belly crawl, but got to hands and knees crawling size fairly quickly. It continues on to Ranshaw Avenue, but we did not follow it that far.

We took our time getting out and stopped to take pictures. It has started to ice up on the roads but we were lucky and the roads were not yet slippery. Groups returning later had to change routes as one of the park roads had closed. The freezing rain outside was in stark contrast to the warm, dry passage we had been in during the day.

Buttram's Cave

Buttram's Cave, Warren County, KY
February 17, 2003

by Ed Klausner

Ed Klausner, John Lovaas and Dawn Ryan

Fortunately, John, Dawn and I had made plans to return to the upper Midwest on Tuesday following the February CRF expedition to Mammoth Cave. Those people leaving on Monday faced miserable travel conditions and expected to only make it partway home on Monday.

John, Dawn and I waited until early afternoon before venturing out to Buttram's Cave, close to the CRF facility in Hamilton Valley. Pat Kambesis had given us directions to the cave and planned on meeting us there later in the afternoon.

It was easy to find the cave and we were followed to the sinkhole entrance by a curious, but friendly horse. We expected to survey the dry upper level. Unfortunately, there had been a storm going on for several days and there was no dry upper level.

The sinkhole was oval, about 40 feet long by 25 wide and completely ice covered. Negotiating the climb down was interesting. We managed to survey from the dripline into the large entrance area (53 feet) and sketch the room. There was also a small alcove on the way into the main entrance room and we surveyed that also. The rest of the survey will have to wait for dryer conditions.

Pat never showed up and we went back to Hamilton Valley without her. It didn't surprise any of us that she would opt not to survey in freezing drizzle. I just wonder why we did.

Easy Pickings

Oncewas, Meyer's, Near Toaster, Ryan's Rimstone, Jerrad's and Red Dot Caves
Jones County, Iowa
22 February, 2003

by Ed Klausner

Gary Engh and Ed Klausner

Gary and I weren't sure we would actually get out and do any ridgewalking on this cold Saturday because we planned on spending most of the day talking to landowners. We were confused about ownership of several pieces of property in Jones County and thought we could clear it up by talking to neighbors in the area. We managed to get some names and phone numbers and will make some calls. We also

dropped off some maps while we were in the area. That landowner told us about some additional property they had with exposed rock. Off we went.

The first cave, Once was Cave, was a shelter cave that was about 24 feet long. While we were surveying it, the son-in-law of the owner came by and asked if we wanted to see a cave across the valley. Off we went, again, and surveyed Meyer's Cave, a 15 foot mechanical cave. The best part was that across a side valley, we could see several holes. Most turned out to be caves. The next cave (Near Toaster Cave) was probably a bit longer than 22 feet, but there was so much raccoon crap that that's as far as I wanted to push. Next door was a surprise. Ryan's Rimstone Cave had a small series of rimstone dams and some flowstone. It was only a bit over 15 feet long. Next door to that was another small, but nice cave, Jerrad's Cave, about 17 feet long.

The last cave of the day required some work to enter. Gary enlarged the entrance so I could get in, albeit with some difficulty. We got one 24 foot shot. The floor was dry and easy to dig. There is a dig at the back. We saw several more promising holes, but they will have to wait for some other day.

Editors note: This is a trip report that came to light after collecting cobwebs for many years. Thanks to Larry Welch for finding it and to that long-lost caver Bryan Bain for putting it in words.

THE LOST PASSAGE OF COLDWATER CAVE

Bryan Bain

Way back in the late 1960's, Coldwater Cave co-discoverers, Steve Barnett and Dave Jagnow, were on one of their early exploration trips. In those days, the only way into Coldwater Cave was via the spring entrance using scuba gear. While Dave waited in the mainstream, Steve pushed into a downstream side-passage and reported finding a drainage divide thought to be an overflow connection between Coldwater Cave and a parallel cave system. Years passed, many miles of passage were surveyed by many Coldwater cavers, but the elusive "Lost Passage" remained an intriguing mystery.

During my Coldwater Cave heyday in the mid-1980's, I began seeking out this rumored Lost Passage. Pushing past drainage divides often result in major breakthroughs, just like the Pig Trough located off Cascade Passage that led to Wanda's Walkway (The downstream part of which was never completely pushed.). I called Steve Barnett who tried to describe the details of that trip the best he could. After a couple of wasted trips spent looking and digging, Mike Nelson and I finally persuaded Steve to come out of caving retirement long enough to physically lead us to his legendary Lost Passage.

During a spring thaw in March of 1986, Mike and I followed Steve downstream. We entered Sand Canyon because Steve thought the Lost Passage was in the back part of that passage. I was pretty sure that it wasn't, because the Sand Canyon survey notes said that the passage got too small to continue. Well, the passage got tiny and grim, but it did go, much to Mike's and my dismay. After what seemed like an eternity, scraping along in that tight, snaggy, nasty crawl we finally reached a junction. The Lost Passage really did exist! But, it was sumped due to the snow melt run-off. Back at the mainstream, we had to fight rising high water and raging currents, the worst flood condition I've ever seen in Coldwater Cave.

Labor Day Weekend of 1986 found Mike Nelson and I on a Coldwater Cave trip where we surveyed Pothole Country Passage and 200 feet in First Right Hand Side Passage. We also went back to check out the Lost Passage. Since my brain is often dusty and full of cobwebs when it comes to remembering things that occurred over a decade ago, I looked up my old trip report and the following is a quote:

During this 13-1/2 hour trip in Coldwater Cave, we dug in the "Lost Passage", only managing to reach the point where Steve Barnett had turned around years ago. Beyond appears to be "fairly" easy digging in a going passage.

The reason we weren't more persistent, if I remember right, was because we were afraid Mike's wife was getting worried about us and because I was getting tired. This was an off-weekend trip, we had told Delores, our only surface support, we

would be out by sunrise. When we dragged our weary butts out of the cave, we were greeted by dawn's early light and Mike's very concerned, but relieved spouse.

A few months later, December of 1986, was the next trip to the Lost Passage. This outing consisted of veteran Steve Moon, two newish "young sprouts" (Larry Welch and Mike Lace), and yours truly. The following narrative was taken directly from Larry's trip report.

Bryan Bain decided that he was going to return to the "Lost Passage" at the end of Sand Canyon, trowel in hand. Recruited to go along were Steve Moon, Mike Lace, and myself. This is really quite a trip, because Sand Canyon is over 2 miles downstream of the shaft. To get there one must also pass through a patch of deep water known as "the swim" which can strike fear in the hearts of non-swimmers such as myself. Nevertheless, we made it nearly to Sand Canyon where Bryan stopped to change carbide. Of course there was a bit of ground to cover still to reach the "Lost Passage". Sand Canyon has been surveyed back for quite a ways, at which point the going gets a bit nasty. A pair of incredible S curves followed by a low splashway leads to the point where the "Lost Passage" joins Sand Canyon. Beyond a little ways is a dome where tired cavers can regroup a bit, while diggers can push 30 feet onward to the dig site. Extending the survey to this point will provide hours of intense pleasure. Bryan managed to dig past Steve Barnett's turnaround from many years ago and pushed another 20 feet onward into virgin passage, with Mike Lace widening behind him using the auxiliary trowel. The lead appeared to be closing when Bryan's light went out and he decided that it might be a good time to turn around. From this point it was a pretty long trip back... There is a lot of potential in the Sand Canyon vicinity, and I suspect Bryan will return before long.

For years, I was the only one to remain optimistic about this lead. Since my lamp was dying just as I made it through the dig, I never did get a good look at what lay beyond. However, I sort of got the impression, if I recall correctly, that the passage was opening up. The tight side-ways-crawl S curves getting to the Lost Passage probably demoralized most of my crew, just like it did to Mike Nelson and I on our first trip. Plus, Steve Moon was also jinxed with a fickle lamp. After changing the carbide in my lamp, the group consensus was to get the hell out of Dodge City, so we did. I always wished I had gone back to the dig site for one last look. Ten years passed before any cavers would once again venture back.

During the next Coldwater Cave decade (1986-1996), most of the cavers focused their attention on the Grappling Falls region, the vast newly discovered areas beyond the up-stream sumps, and many other worthy speleo-ventures. I moved away from Iowa to pursue my education and career. Some of the other Coldwater Cave "old hand" burned out or semi-retired from the project. My beloved "young sprouts" became grizzled, seasoned veterans. Hard charging, new cavers were enlisted to pump fresh blood into the project. Miles of passages were explored, surveyed, and in some cases, resurveyed.

Fast forward to August of 1996. Larry Welch and Chris Beck headed down-stream with the intentions of surveying either Sinus Passage or Sand Canyon. Circumstances conspired against Sinus, so they opted for Sand. Prior to actually surveying, they experienced a lost-and-found episode with the instruments. The following account was once again pilfered from Dr. Welsh's trip report.

I hadn't been to the end of Sand Canyon for over nine years, but it turned out better than I had remembered it. The main body of Sand Canyon had been surveyed by Mike Bounk, Pete DeVries, et. al. They stopped at a narrow canyon. Beyond this narrow passage, which has been coined The Keyhole Passage (by Mike Nelson I think) lies a drainage divide and the famous "Lost Passage" originally discovered by Steve Barnett during the early exploration of the cave. Steve helped Bryan Bain and Mike Nelson rediscover the passage in the mid 1980's and Bryan led a subsequent digging trip trying to open the end of The Lost Passage. Bryan still seems quite enthusiastic about this lead

although few others share his optimism. The location of the dig and The Lost Passage remain a mystery as the survey has not progressed past the start of The Keyhole Passage. Having been on Bryan's dig trip, I had a loathing for the passage but turned out to be pleasantly surprised. It was difficult to survey, but not impossible, and Chris and I managed to run the traverse slightly past the infamous Bathtub (where one has a tendency to fall out of a tight canyon into a pool of water). It didn't amount to much in terms of footage but it was a major psychological boost for me. The survey is doable and the passage not that bad. We even found an easier bypass to the first couple of S turns.

December of 1996 found Larry Welsh heading back to Sand Canyon for more mapping fun. This time he drafted John Lovaas, undoubtedly with false promises of big walking-size canyons with nice, dry, sandy floors. They surveyed approximately 110 feet, including the newly found lower by-pass, through the remaining S turns to the junction, and even three stations into the Lost Passage.

Larry and John returned to the Lost Passage in February of 1997. They picked up the survey and set two stations before John began suffering from a severe bellyache. The curse of the Lost Passage? Larry briefly pushed on ahead and took a quick gander at my old dig site. Past the dig, he observed a canyon passage that opened up and appeared to go. John was nauseous, waiting for him back in the Sand Canyon, so he did not attempt to push the passage at that time. Afterwards, an excited and optimistic Larry phone to let me in on the latest news and graciously invited me on a future trip.

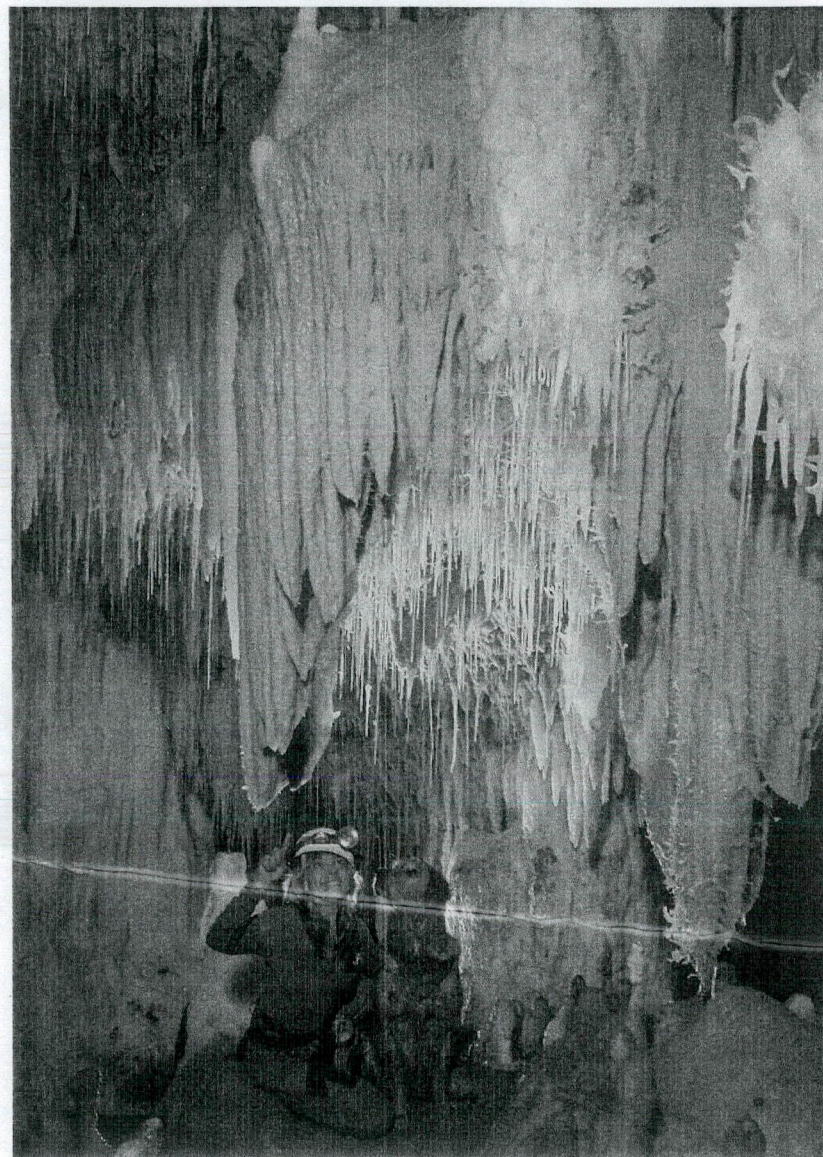
I was unable to make the April of 1997 trip back to Sand Canyon, but that did not stop Larry Welch and John Lovaas from making a return trip. Unfortunately, the Lost Passage was totally sumped, forcing our heroes to make a tactical retreat.

THE FINAL CHAPTER OF THE LOST PASSAGE **Bryan Bain**

Labor Day Weekend, 1997; I drove up from Dorothy and Toto land for an off-weekend trip into Coldwater Cave. It's been over seven years since my last visit. What is it with this seven year itch stuff??? After a very nice chat with Kenny and Wanda Flatland, I headed for the speleo-shack and spent a pleasant evening in the company of Mike Lace, Gary Engh, Larry Welch, and John Lovaas. After a hearty Sunday morning breakfast at the Harmony House Café, I geared up and headed down the ol' shaft. Larry, John, and I proceeded down-stream at a dignified pace. It was great to be back after my long hiatus. Seen along the way, besides many beautiful formations, were one crawdad and several little fish. We arrived at Sand Canyon quicker than I expected, even though it's at least a two mile hike to this point. The nasty section of "S" curves at the end of Sand Canyon seemed shorter and easier than I remembered, but must have been a bitch to survey. We reached the Lost Passage and extended the survey up into Dodge City Dome, getting royally slimed in the process. Once in this dome, most cavers imagine hearing Wyatt Earp telling them to get the hell out of Dodge. With trowel in hand, I crawled the remaining few feet up to my dig site that I had last been to about 11 years ago. I dug through a couple of humps and squeezed forward as far as I could. The prospects of proceeding further appeared bitterly grim to me. Disappointed, I began backing out. To add insult to injury, I got sort of stuck. Larry rescued me with a few tugs on my boots. John and Larry surveyed up to the dig while I regained my composure back in Dodge. We slogged our way back to the surface after caving for about nine hours. The Lost Passage dig is a dynamic region. Future floods could silt it completely shut or maybe blast it wide open. That will be for other cavers to find out. Certainly, my curiosity has been quenched. To quote my ol' caving buddy, Mike Nelson, "Been there, done that!"



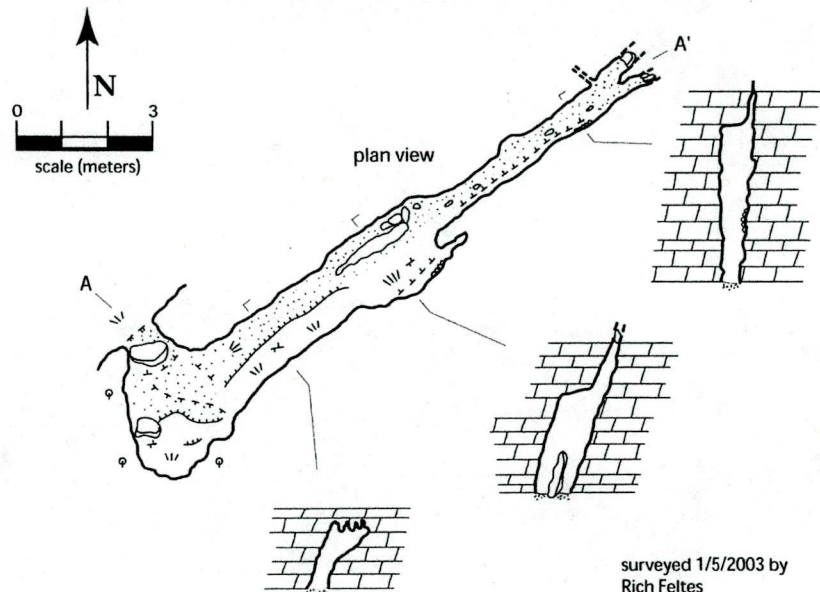
Delicate formations in Sorbetos,
Puerto Rico. Photo by Dave Bunnell



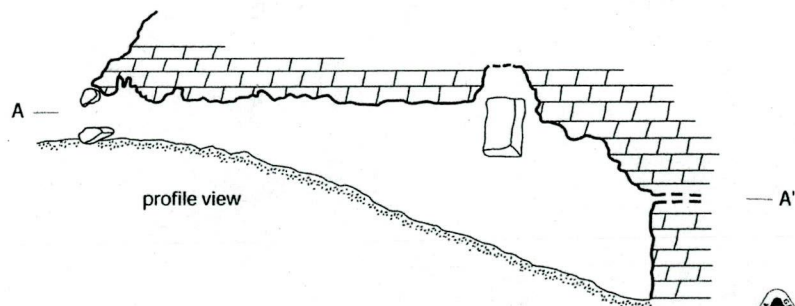
Mimi and Parcha the caving dog in
Sorbetos, Puerto Rico. Photo by
Dave Bunnell

Brothers and Sisters Cave

Jones County, Iowa



surveyed 1/5/2003 by
Rich Feltes
Ed Klausner
Jim Roberts



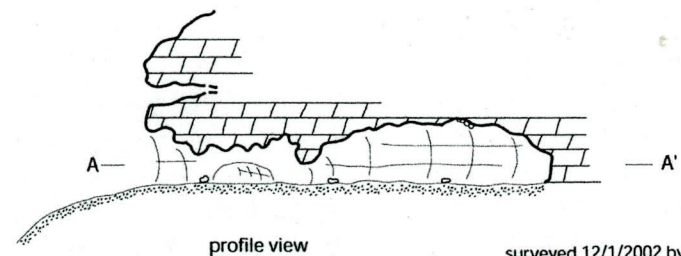
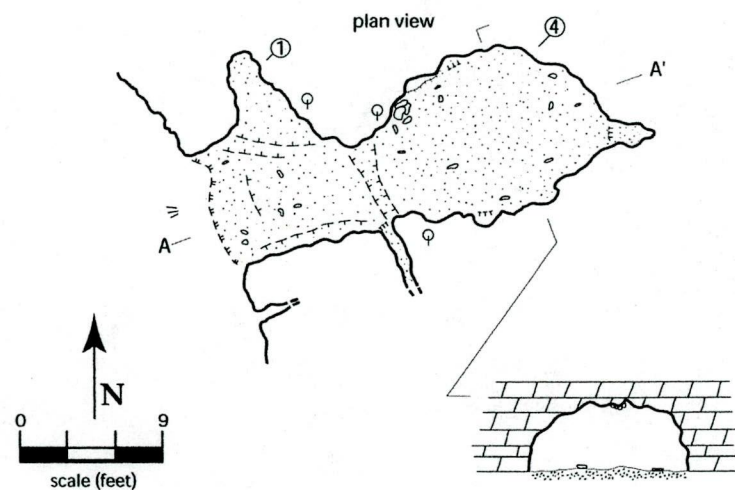
N.S.S. standard map symbols
total surveyed length = 13.4 meters (44 feet)



Klausner 2003

Mosquito Dome Cave

Jones County, Iowa



surveyed 12/1/2002 by
Rich Feltes
Ed Klausner
Phil LaRue

N.S.S. standard map symbols
total surveyed length = 36 feet (11 meters)

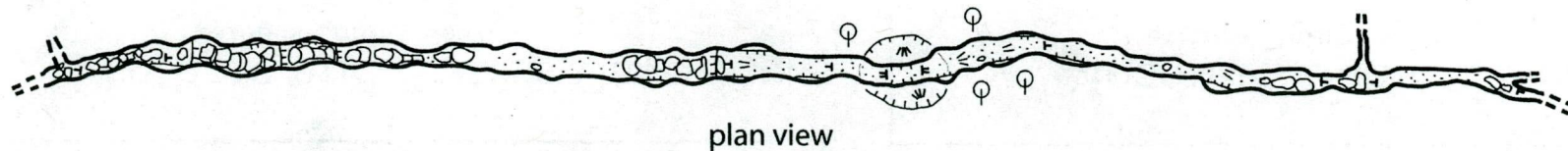
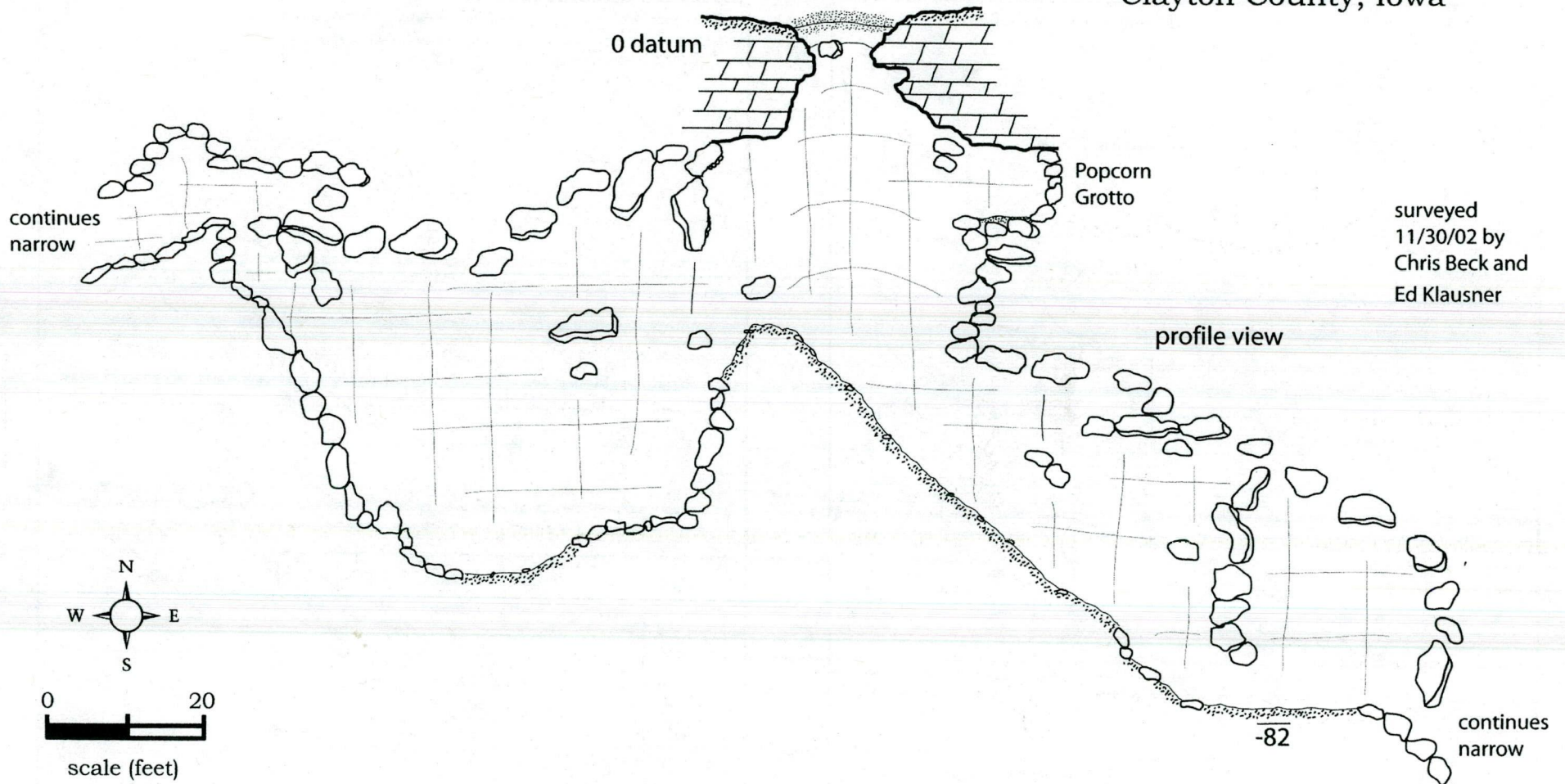


Klausner 2003

Steamtrail Crevice

Clayton County, Iowa

surveyed
11/30/02 by
Chris Beck and
Ed Klausner



plan view

total survey length
261.0 feet (79.6meters)



Klausner 2002