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# INTERCOM

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Iowa Grotto

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Iowa City, IA 52244

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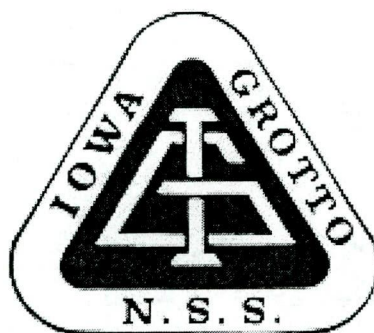
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Cave Rescue: Contact the Kentucky Disaster and Emergency Services Central Dispatch at 502-564-7815 for cave emergencies only in the NCRC Central Region of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

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

Cover Photo: Joyce Hoffmaster rigged to a poisonous tree at Birds Nest Cave.  
Isla de Mona, Puerto Rico. 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 39

Issue 4

C O N T E N T S

Iowa Grotto Meeting Minutes - - - - -	49
Trip reports:	
Nettle Cave Revisited - - - - -	50
Ranshaw Avenue - - - - -	50
Iowa Grotto Picnic 2003 - - - - -	51
Ganter Obscured - - - - -	52
Cave Maps:	
Nettle Cave - - - - -	53

IOWA GROTTA MINUTES

July 23, 2003

Regular Meeting

The meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace, at 8:05 p.m., with 6 members and 1 guest, Arrica Smith, present., after a slide show on the recent trip to Isla de Mona and the north shore of Puerto Rico. Minutes from the June 25, 2003, meeting were read and approved. A treasurers report was given which showed balances of \$686.07 in the Coldwater fund; \$298.43 in the General fund; and \$162.97 in petty cash.

TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported on his trip to Puerto Rico with Chris Beck, Pat Kambesis and Ed Klausner. Jim Roberts reported on his digging project at Coldwater Cave. During Coldwater weekend, Roland Moore, Bill Mulder and Larry Welch did some survey work at the first right hand passage. Data loggers were changed and the dye study continued. The new access shaft at Coldwater was named the "Big Jack " entrance. John Kirk reported on his restoration trip to Mammoth Cave. He also visited Long Cave, Sides Cave, Dogwood and Adwell Caves. He continued with a report on a trip to Blue Spring Cavern in Tn. Gary Engh reported on a lead checking trip to Otter Creek, Jackson Co., with Ed K.. Loren Schutt reported on his trip to Maquoketa Caves. FUTURE TRIPS: See the July Hotline and the N.S.S. News for details. A trip is planned next weekend to Engelken's Cave and Hunt's Cave. 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 picnic will be at Dutton's Cave County Park, Fayette County, August 2nd and 3rd, 2003. There was discussion about the upcoming picnic. The Grotto Library is still looking for library materials. NEW BUSINESS: The Intercom deadline is Sept. 1st.. Pat Kambesis will be presenting information on her Thesis project this fall. With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m..

IOWA GROTTA MINUTES

AUGUST 27TH, 2003

Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Mike Lace with five members present. Minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved and the treasurer's report listed \$686.07 in the Coldwater Fund, \$808.63 in the General Fund and \$186.72 in petty cash. TRIP REPORTS: John Kirk reported on his trip to Hunt's cave and Engelken Cave with Phil LaRue as well as a trip to Carter Caves State Park, KY where he visited Bat Cave and Skyscraper Cave. John also described his visits to Soward's Cave, Wet Cave and Gouldsberg Cave at the recent Grotto picnic. Ed Klausner reported on a trip to update the survey of Nettle Cave and the new survey of Head's Up Cave in Jackson County. He also mentioned attending (from the surface) the SCUBA nuptials of Mike Nelson at Roubidoux Spring, MO - Congratulations Mike and Micky! Mike Lace reported on a trip to install dye tracing bugs in upstream Coldwater Cave, by John Lovaas, Dawn Ryan and Bill Mulder. FUTURE TRIPS: The upcoming WSS Hodag Hunt in Gays Mills was discussed. Small Cave survey and leadchecking in Jackson County will be upcoming. The 2004 NSS Convention will be held in Michigan. Elizabeth Miller will be continuing her work with the State entomologist on wintering populations of mosquitos in IA caves starting in October. OLD BUSINESS: The next Intercom deadline is September 1st. Pat Kambesis' presentation of her thesis work in the Coldwater Cave basin is tentatively scheduled for the November Grotto meeting. NEW BUSINESS: There will be an IA cave slide show at the September Grotto Meeting and potentially another at the October meeting. Members are reminded that the November and December meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of the month (instead of the normal fourth Wed.) to avoid conflict with the holidays. Future locales for next year's Grotto Picnic were discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



## Nettle Cave Revisited

Nettle Cave, Heads Up Cave, Jackson County, IA

August 24, 2003

by Ed Klausner

Chris Beck, Gary Engh, Ed Klausner, Mike Lace and Lee Roe

Several weeks ago, Gary and I were shown Nettle Cave by Lee. He had dug open an area near the back of the shelter entrance and discovered close to two hundred feet of passage that was very nicely decorated. Lee had attempted to make a map of the cave, but had no experience surveying. He said he would like to come along when we surveyed the cave and we made plans to do this later in the summer.

It was somewhat difficult to find the cave because the vegetation was so high. As Mike pointed out, there is a reason why it is called Nettle Cave. Once we found the shelter entrance, Gary started working on enlarging the tight spot at the bottom of the dig. Mike, Chris and Lee did tape and instrument while I sketched. Each of us explained what we were doing to Lee.

The solution tube is fairly low for about 100 feet. There are soda straws, stalactites, stalagmites, translucent bacon, a few helectites and some rimstone dams. The cave opens up to 19 foot ceilings, but it doesn't last. There is a small passage that only continues for another 30 feet before it gets too narrow to continue.

After we finished Nettle Cave, we continued along the cliff face and passed Headless Cave that had been previously mapped. There was a shelter with two small passages not far beyond Headless that had not been mapped, so we surveyed this 45 foot cave, the 32<sup>nd</sup> one surveyed this year. For lack of a better name, we called it Heads Up Cave.

Mike had plans to map a near by cave that was quite wet and had several entrances. We had skipped this in the winter as it was too cold and we didn't want to be wet for the walk back to the parking area. We came up with several excuses as to why we didn't want to survey it that day and were accused (rightly so) of whining, but the landowner wasn't home and that took care of the issue. Since the vegetation was so thick, we didn't seriously consider ridgewalking and called it a day.

## Ranshaw Avenue

Mammoth Cave, KY

August 30, 2003

by Ed Klausner

Doug Alderman, Charles Fox, Ed Klausner, and Jonathan Mays

There are two ways to get to the Albert's Domes area of Mammoth Cave from the historic section. From the historic entrance, a short trip down the tourist trail to the Giant's Coffin and the Wooden Bowl Room will get you to the beginning of Ganter Avenue. Ganter Avenue will eventually get you to Henry's Dome and then to Albert's Domes. Alternatively, you could continue on the tourist trail and go to Wright's Rotunda. From there, you leave the tourist trail and cross the rotunda to Black Chambers. This is a large breakdown area and can be quite confusing. Ranshaw Avenue starts as a hole in the floor in Black Chambers. Albert's Domes can then be reached via Ranchaw Avenue.

Since none of us has ever been to Ranshaw Avenue, we followed Scott House's group whose convenient objective for the day was some survey in Black Chambers. Ranshaw Avenue was named after Willis Ranshaw who was the manager of the Mammoth Cave Hotel from 1902 to 1922.

I took notes on the route so I could find the beginning of Ranshaw on future trips and more importantly, find the way out at the end of the day. The first 17 or so stations in Ranshaw were through breakdown that was below Black Chambers. After that, it became a phreatic tube of walking height. My quad map starts at about this location and I started filling in the holes in the survey notes. Mostly, this consisted of adding floor detail and a few cross sections. This passage has been

known since prehistoric times and we found reed torches and at least one tool used for knocking crystals off the walls and ceilings. They are estimated to be between 3,500 and 2,500 years old.

After a few hundred feet there is a side passage known as Montie's Pass. Again, a bit of floor detail and cross sections were added. As we headed down Montie's Pass, there was a floor channel as noted in the survey notes. The problem was that the channel also continued away from the main passage, under a ledge, and then off in a different direction. This was clearly surveyed as we found "B" survey stations. The B survey was not on my line plot, so there was little point of surveying this. It could be that the survey book was lost, the survey was old and therefore was not sketched to scale and had no floor details or vertical relief, or the survey was relatively new and perfectly good as is. Later that evening, we found that the B survey was from 1969 and was not sketched to scale, and had no floor details. It will probably have to be resurveyed.

Ranshaw Avenue continues north from the junction with Montie's Pass, but it is no longer walking sized. We were crawling by the time we reached Lee Way, a small passage on the left. Lee Way was named for Thomas E. Lee, who was a guide. His signature and an 1879 date appears in the area. Lee Way is one of the many connections to Ganter Avenue.

Towards the end of Ranshaw Avenue, there is a small dome that leads up to Edith Avenue and Minna's Way. This was a good stopping place for us because we were running out of time. The lower part of the dome was noted to have a lead. It pinched out after 45 feet. We took a trend and sketched it in.

There is considerably more to do here. Minna's Way and Edith's Avenue will need to have leads checked and some floor detail added, the B survey will have to be resurveyed, and then the Albert's Domes area itself will require considerable work. One trip report said that there were as many as seven levels of passage around the domes. I have the feeling I'll become pretty familiar with the route to the domes.

### Iowa Grotto Picnic - 2003

August 2nd-3rd, 2003

Dutton's County Park, Fayette County, IA

By Mike Lace

A total of 38 cavers, along with family and friends, gathered for the annual Iowa Grotto picnic. With the rain gods once again appeased, we spent a beautiful Saturday touring some fine NE Iowa caves before regrouping for the evening gorgefest. The wide selection of entrees was only matched by the seemingly bottomless Grotto auction box filled with sometimes unspeakable treasures for the Caver Auction. Spirited bidding and generous donations drove the net proceeds for the weekend to \$689 which will really help support future Grotto publication efforts and keep our annual dues stable. The proceeds, however, are a bonus to the real benefit of having Grotto folks and friends get together for a fun weekend, especially with faces we might not get a chance to see the rest of the year.

Here are the squeezebox results:

Adult winner = Charlie Knight - 6 "  
Kids winner = Conner Cleveland - 6"

Allison - 7"  
Aricca - 6 1/4"  
Chris Beck - 7 3/4"  
Dave Cleveland - 7"  
Joe Dixon - 8 3/4"  
Mark Jones - 8 1/4"  
John Kirk - 7 1/2"  
Mike Lace - 7"  
John Lovaas - 8 "  
Lynn Mulder - 7 1/2"



Chris Rechten - 7"  
Jeff Rechten - 6 1/2"  
Becky Reth - 6 1/4"  
Dick Reth - 9 3/4"  
Jim Roberts - 8 3/4"  
Dawn Ryan - 7 1/4"  
Nick Schmuecker - 6 1/2"  
Dave Wysocki - 7 3/4"

Thanks to everyone who brought auction items or food and/or just came to hang out. A job well done to Phil LaRue for his grilling expertise; Chris Beck, Mark Jones and Jeff Rechten for running the squeezebox and our caving trip leaders - Doug Schmuecker, Chris Beck, Mark Jones and Gary Engh. See you next year!

### Ganter Obscured

Ganter Cave, Mammoth Cave National Park, KY  
August 31, 2003  
Doug Alderman, Dawn Cardace, and Ed Klausner

By Ed Klausner

I had two sets of leads for Ganter Cave on the north side of the Green River in Kentucky. One set was horizontal leads and the other vertical leads. There weren't enough people on the Labor Day Cave Research Foundation expedition for a vertical trip, but there were enough people for the horizontal trip.

We had some doubts about the trip as it had been raining and the Green River was rising, but a call to the ferry to get the river level assured us that the entrance to Ganter Cave was well above river level. The access road was under construction so parking was a bit of a problem. We found a wide spot in the road to park and headed down the trail. Both Doug and I had been to the cave before and had little trouble finding it.

The lock was easy to open, thanks to the Park Service. We had trouble with the lock last year and the Park Service either lubricated it or replaced it. The entrance area was as muddy as usual, but there were signs of recent flooding. As we walked along the trunk passage, all the survey stations were obliterated for the first 40 or so stations. This was unfortunate as we were searching for some leads at numbered survey stations in this area.

Our first stop was to try to find the tie in station for a hanging survey. The tie in was listed as an "obvious point on a large breakdown block. We spent about two hours trying to find this section of cave with no luck. The tie in station was not the problem, but the passage itself couldn't be located. This may be due to a 15 year old recollection of the location by the original surveyor. With more than two miles of cave, it is no wonder that the general location of this short piece of hanging survey wouldn't be remembered.

Several of the leads were just cut arounds or passages that quickly pinched out. There was one tantalizing lead about 12 feet off the floor. It carried water to a "V" shaped lip with passage height of 4 feet that was 3 feet wide. It would take a ladder of 15 or more feet in length to reach the passage. This presents a problem as there is about a two mile hike to the cave and then several thousand feet of passage from the entrance to the lead.

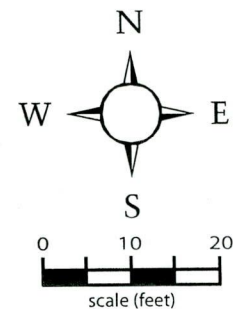
There was some confusing survey done under the big breakdown room not far from the entrance. The missing survey stations (and the rather wet lower section of the cave) kept us from figuring out the survey notes from what seemed like a grim survey trip.

There is more work to be done in the cave. Besides the vertical leads, a biological inventory should also be done. The cave was closed to permit cavers about 5 years ago. It would be interesting to see if there is a difference in the abundance of the species now in the cave and what had been recorded several years ago.

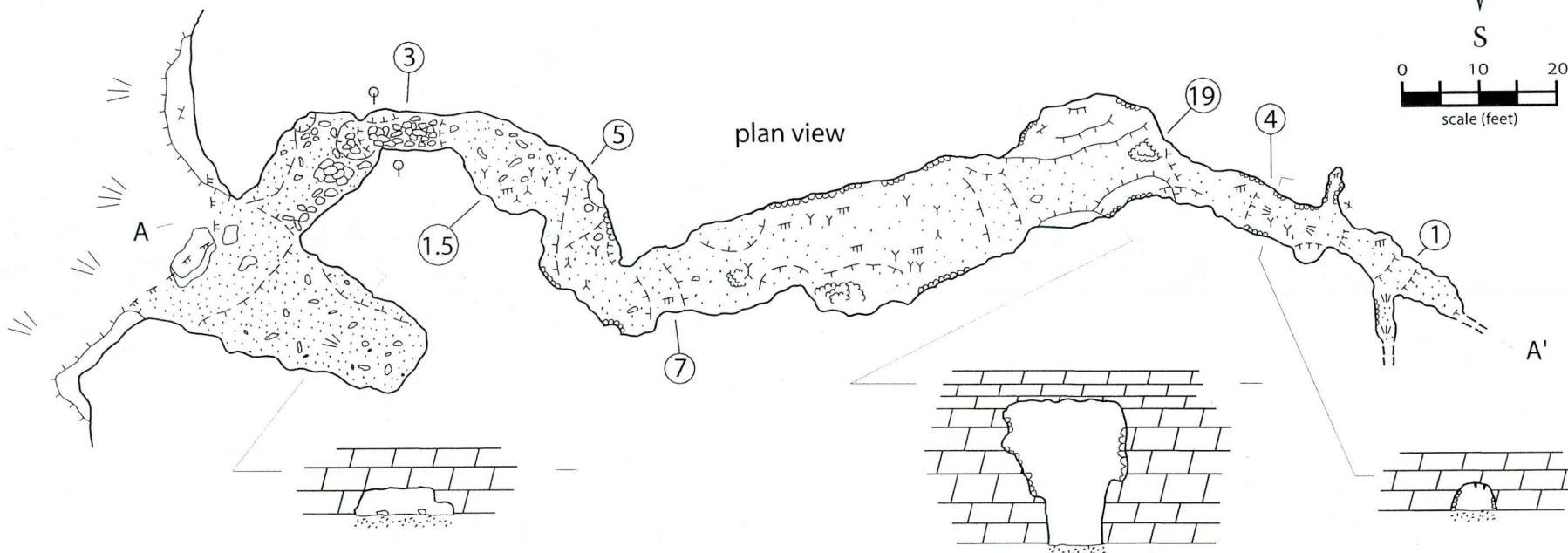


# Nettle Cave

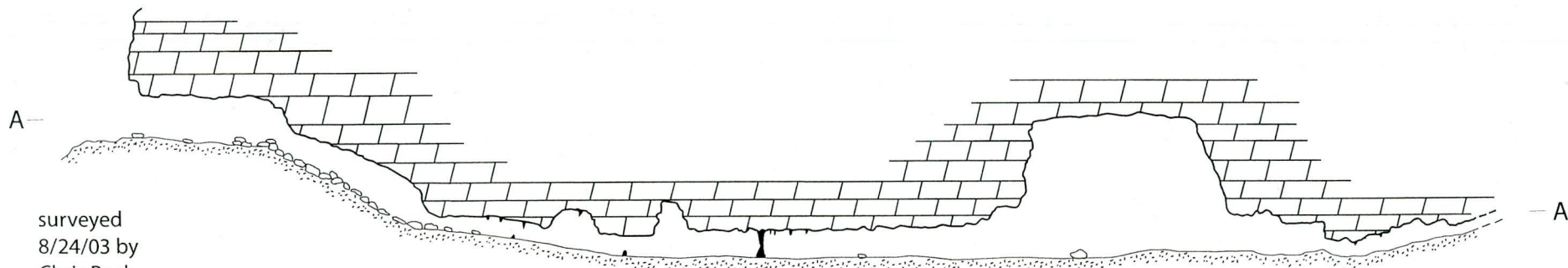
## Jackson County, Iowa



plan view



extended profile view



surveyed  
8/24/03 by  
Chris Beck,  
Gary Engh,  
Ed Klausner,  
Mike Lace,  
Lee Roe

total survey length  
218.8 feet (66.7 meters)

standard NSS cave map symbols



Klausner 2003





