

April 2012

## Intercom, Volume 48, No. 2, March-April 2012

Scott Dankof

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### Recommended Citation

Dankof, Scott, "Intercom, Volume 48, No. 2, March-April 2012" (2012). *Intercom*. 45.  
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## **INTERCOM**

Volume 48, Issue 2  
March-April 2012

### **Iowa Grotto**

P.O. Box 228  
Iowa City, IA 52244  
Grotto Website: [www.caves.org/grotto/iowa](http://www.caves.org/grotto/iowa)

Coldwater Cave Project website:  
<http://www.caves.org/project/coldwater>

**Membership Dues:** due January 1, \$15.00 per year, includes INTERCOM and Hotline 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 is May 1st. 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 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:** Un-named cave in Newton Co. Arkansas. Photo by Scott Dankof.



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

Chairman - - - - - Mike Lace  
Vice Chairman - - - - - Ed Klausner  
Secretary - - - - - Teresa Kurtz  
Treasurer - - - - - John Donahue

Volume 48

Issue 2

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## **C A L E N D A R**

2012 Grotto Picnic - (August 3rd thru 5th). To be held at the Brown family private campground in Ozark, Jackson County, IA.

July Grotto Meeting - July 25th, room 125, Trowbridge Hall.

August 22nd Grotto Meeting will be held at Phil Larue and Gaylene Gilbert's new house (574 Delta Avenue, Mechanicsville, IA). Grill meat will be provided but feel free to bring a dish to pass around. Directions on how to get there will be

sent out as August gets closer.  
Vertical training session - Sept. 8-9th (Doug Schmuecker needs a minimum of five cavers to attend; contact him at 319-642-7676)

September Grotto meeting - Sept. 26th, room 125, Trowbridge Hall.  
October Grotto meeting - Oct. 24th, room 125, Trowbridge Hall.  
October 6th and 7th - Cave Rescue drills. Location to be announced. For info contact Doug Schmuecker at 319-642-7676.

November Grotto meeting - to be held on the fourth wed. ( Nov. 28th)  
No December Grotto meeting due to the holidays.

Iowa Grotto  
Regular Meeting  
March 28, 2012

The regular meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Mike Lace, Chair, at 7:55pm with 11 members present. Prior to the meeting, Lace gave a presentation on an expedition in March 2012 to caves of Aruba and Curacao. Minutes of the February 23, 2012 regular meeting were presented.

**TRIP REPORTS:** Mike Bounk reported on a trip to Spook Cave (February) where cavers conducted a bat count noting 290 bats; no evidence of Whitenose noted.

Mike Lace travelled to the caves of Aruba and Curacao in March.

**FUTURE TRIPS:** Ongoing survey trips to Mystery Cave. Contact Warren Netherton.

Coldwater is scheduled for April 21. MVOR is planned for the last weekend in April.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The annual Grotto picnic is scheduled for August 3-5 in Jackson County. Several cave opportunities were discussed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** All volumes (I-V) of the cave map books have been re-printed and are available. Volume VI

is currently in production. The November Grotto meeting will be re-scheduled for November 28 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Welcome to new Grotto member, Dee Suda. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Iowa Grotto  
Regular Meeting  
April 25, 2012

The regular meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Ed Klausner, Vice Chair, at 8:25pm with 5 members present. Prior to the meeting, Joe Dixon gave a presentation on his bat survey work over the last year and discussed the relationship between bat species and the location in caves where they hibernate. Also discussed were temperature ranges and hibernation location and future plans for additional bat work and a bio survey of caves in Iowa. Minutes of the March 28, 2012 regular meeting were presented and approved. There was no treasurer's report.

**TRIP REPORTS:** Brad Smith reported on a trip to the entrance of a cave in Watertown NY. Joe Dixon reported on a newly found cave in Cedar County. Loren Schutt reported on a trip to Wisconsin where he discovered that Kikapoo Cavern may be reopening as a commercial cave.

**FUTURE TRIPS:** Ongoing survey trips to Mystery Cave. Contact Warren Netherton.

MVOR is planned for the last weekend in April. NSS Convention is in June in West Virginia. There will be Kemling survey and restoration trips. Contact Chris Beck.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The annual Grotto picnic is scheduled for August 3-5 in Jackson County.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A proposed application for a grant for the DNR to supply counties and private cave owners with decontamination equipment was discussed. Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Please welcome new Grotto member - Dee Suda.

## The Mark Jones Tour

Michael Bounk, Bert Exline, and Mark Jones

By Michael Bounk

March 17, 2012

Bert had to work until late Friday night. Therefore, we left Tipton about 1am, and arrived at the Cold-water Cave shed about 5am. When we arrived the only other person there was Mark.

We entered the cave about 10:20 am and headed downstream. I showed Bert and Mark the volcanic ash bed. It is located slightly downstream and across the passage from the Iron Bacteria Formation, at the high ledge. The water was very low, somewhere around .6

We continued on to Cascade Passage. Mark took us up Cascade to show us a new dome that had been discovered just a few months ago when a wall collapsed. The first part of Cascade is much lower, with more rimstone dams than I recalled. It took a while for my body to remember how best to go over them. At the junction with Wellpipe Passage, I decided to rest while Mark and Bert went a few hundred feet further up Cascade to the new dome. I hated to miss it, but decided that I better conserve my energy to exit the cave. When they returned we headed back to the main-stream passage, noting the wellpipe and John Ackerman's entrance shaft. We rested at the mouth of the Downstream Passage and discussed it's likely relationship to the rest of the cave. All of us slowly walked back upstream, mainly due to my tired legs. We finally exited the cave at 4pm. Thanks for a great trip Mark!

And on the Seventh Day, Liz and Brad Went Caving

Mississippi Valley Ozark Regional Meeting

April 27 - 29, 2012

By Liz Robinson

We left for this MVOR on Thursday night the 26th and stayed in St. Louis. There was an exhibit of Star Trek memorabilia at the St. Science Center that several friends who had seen it in other parts of the country said was well worth a visit. We liked the way it was not an "Adoration of the Stars" but was heavy on how the shows were made and their impact on science, as well as the technical aspects of movie and TV production. After viewing the exhibit we headed off for Perryville.

We arrived in Perryville early enough to find a good place to park which was with Windy City and to get something to eat at the Howdy Party. A pig or two had been roasted during the day and was served up with beans, bread and sauce--all free. A caver band from Chicago with Grateful Gary played music and there was a small bonfire lit where people gathered. We spent the evening visiting with friends after signing up for a cave trip at the trip reservation. Brad had injured himself the week before when he was doing some work in Watertown, NY and had a bad cut on his leg. He decided not to do a trip that would get him really wet and cause an infection in the still open wound. I wanted to get into Berome Moore. A few years ago I had been scheduled to be on a Berome Moore trip, however there is a black rat snake that frequently cools off in the entrance. A kid who was on the trip panicked when he saw the snake and could not be convinced that he wasn't in danger of being bitten or strangled. The trip

was aborted since we could not leave him alone for several hours. I was not afraid of going on a cave trip myself this time, only that I would NOT get on a cave trip. More on that later.

After talking with the trip people we settled on this Berome Moore trip. I was also under a handicap as well as Brad. The last few events we attended Brad could find MY caving boots but not his own. I looked both for my caving boots as well as my leather hiking boots. They both did a Murphy's on me. So while I was at work I asked Brad to set mine aside if he found them again. Oztotl must have been really mad at me because we could not find a single one of mine. Brad and I both have trouble buying shoes for opposite reasons. He wears a 5 or 6 E width and I wear a 3 or 4A width so I could not wear his. I ended up wearing a very beat up worn out pair of sneakers that had virtually no tread left, but I was determined to cave. I suggested to Brad that we drive to the cave instead of finding a ride with others. that would allow us to stop in Perryville for dinner on our way back to the campground instead of meeting back there and then leaving. The issue is that for MVORs we normally sleep in the truck rather than bother with pitching and folding up a tent.

There were about 25 of us on the trip. Our trip leader was local caver, Denise Hill. We arrived at the reserve and changed into our caving suits. There is a building with a changing area and a non-flush toilet as well as a picnic shelter. There is a plaque dedicating the preserve which was dedicated about a year ago. The cave entrance is right off the edge of the hill on which the shelter is located. We all went in one at a time as there is a crawlway

to enter the cave and a tube just past the entrance. The cave opens up a few feet past the tube.

The cave is lit with incandescent lights up to the base camp, but the walkways are not improved. The trails are fairly easy to follow, however I was having serious problems with my glasses fogging up to the point where I could not see. Several times I had to stop and clean off the lenses. The fogging necessitated my using my cave light to spot areas around my feet. Equally difficult was that the LED lights in my lamp had some kind of short in them so they were disconnected. The incandescent bulb was less effective in lighting the immediate vicinity and of course it lasted shorter and became noticeably less bright over time even with new batteries. My shoes had no purchase on the slippery mud so I had to creep along carefully. The trail goes up and down a lot of breakdown with almost no flat areas until you encounter a waterfall. Then it is smooth sailing to the base camp. We rested a bit at the base camp and then went on to the Cat Track passage. The Cat Track passage is a flat area with footprints of a mother jaguar and her kitten of an extinct species from a long time ago. The cat tracks are well-marked so you can easily see them. At the end of the passage is a large three dimensional print of Mom's footprint. We then went back to the base camp. Denise recommended that I either wait at the base camp or exit the cave while the rest of them went down a well decorated passage off another lead opposite the Cat Track Passage. I decided to stay and wait at the base camp. Who needs to go back to the surface when you can wait inside the cave! It was getting pretty hot and humid outside and I do not do well in that kind of

heat. I was perfectly content exploring the base camp. There were all kinds of kitchen items at the base camp including stoves, places to do dishes, gas tanks etc. Someone came by and told me a ghost story about someone who tried to sleep in the base camp and heard someone pass through who allegedly left a boot print on his sleeping bag. I said I was not afraid of seeing a ghost. I also took a walk down the passage where everybody went and followed the trail as long as it was dry and flat since I was dying to see what was down there. I saw some really nice formation as well as some interesting potholes.

After Brad returned he and I walked down the Cat Track Passage again so he could get some photographs. It was time to exit the cave and Denise came back to get us. The walk out was a lot easier for me than the walk in. I still had the fogging lenses and the slippery rocks but I did not have to use my cave light. We finally got out and Brad went to take some photographs of the entrance.

Denise gave us directions to a caver friendly restaurant which has a cave lot, the Park Et, I believe the name was. We had dinner there and added something to the cave log. It was a nice dinner and real friendly service.

There was no program for the evening, besides the banquet which we elected not to have, the auction in which we did not participate, and the regional meeting of which we got in on the tail end. Neither of us won a door prize. No big deal! most of the prizes were ethanol which neither of us uses, me for medical reasons. We stayed up a while to visit with friends and then went to bed as we had a long drive back. On our way back we stopped in Galesburg, IL to

pick up our National Train Day tickets that were waiting for us, as well as our winter holiday tickets to Syracuse, NY. We both agreed that we would like to get back into Berome Moore again some time when he does not have an injury and I have my proper boots. It was good to be in a wild cave after such a long time.

#### Buffalo National River

Fitton and Boxley Rat Caves, Arkansas  
By Ed Klausner  
April 28 & 29, 2012

Since Fitton Cave has been closed for several years due to WNS, there were quite a few CRF members who had been waiting for a chance to get back in and both survey and monitor the cave for animal life. Nineteen cavers entered Fitton on Saturday morning and headed along East Passage to the Out Room. The Out Room is named for a large piece of breakdown that used to have a large "Out" smoked on it. The "Out" has since been removed, but the name remains.

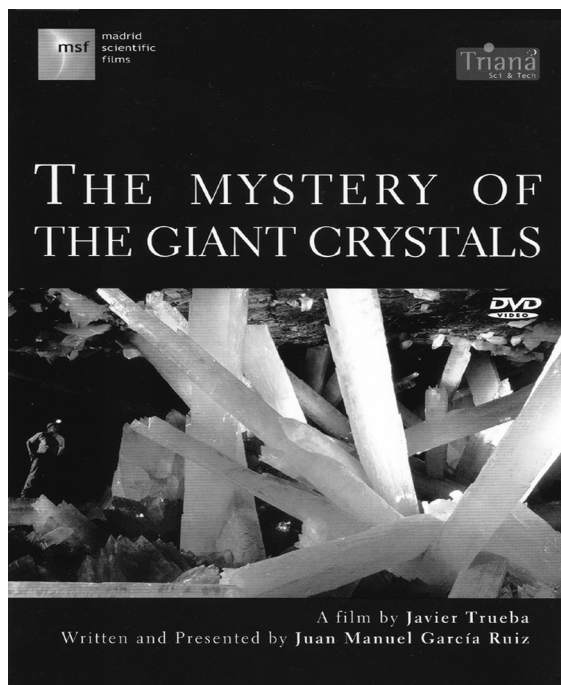
Once in the Out Room, we split into two main groups. One started the re-survey of the Tennouri Passage and the other worked on leads in the Out Room. It seems that the "Out" was not the only thing removed and we spent a considerable amount of time looking for and never finding the tie survey stations we needed. We did find two brass caps, one on the Out Rock and one further east in the Out Room near the Tennouri Passage and used these instead of wasting any more time. We put in a survey line to our objectives that we did not sketch since the Out Room has been surveyed with a good sketch.

The Tennouri Passage crew split into two survey teams and did a leap frog survey. Kayla New and Chad Holderfield both sketched. The other group also split into two teams and surveyed a lead along the south wall for a few hundred feet of new survey. Megan Gallo and I sketched. Eliza-

beth Miller, Dave Paterson and Catherine Becker were on my survey team.

After surveying, we met, as planned, at the Out Rock and headed out of the cave along the same route. We counted bats and found over 750 along with a number of cave salamanders and one vulture. The vulture was near the entrance and evidently got in through the bars of the gate.

Some of us could stay for a second day of caving and we decided to work on small caves that needed to be surveyed in the Boxley area. There were two caves that could be reached from the same parking area, so Kayla New took a new caver and Catherine Becker on a long hike to a short cave while I took Elizabeth, Josh Shock and Dave Paterson on a shorter hike to a reportedly longer cave. We found the cave easily as Dave had been to it recently and started the survey. Dave was lead tape and everything was going smoothly until we encountered a rattlesnake. That was the end of surveying Boxley Rat Cave for this trip. We headed back to the parking area and expected to find Kayla and her crew waiting for us. After a long wait, they returned and told us the cave was not the 30 feet as reported, but well over 100. At least they weren't chased out by a rattlesnake.



**THE MYSTERY OF THE GIANT CRYSTALS** (2010). Madrid Scientific Films. Running time: 50 minutes. Written and presented by Juan Manuel García Ruiz. Directed by Javier Trueba. Distributed by Hampton Research. Aliso Viejo, CA (Catalog #HR5-208). Region Code 0. ISAN 0000-0002-94F8-0000-W-0000-0000-F. Available in both DVD and Blu-Ray formats (\$18.00). Reviewed by Danny A. Brass.

By now, most members of the caving community are aware of the spectacular gypsum (selenite) crystals recently discovered in Mexico's Naica Mine and have likely seen one of the short video or slideshow presentations available on the internet. These giant crystals are as interesting to people today as they were in millennia past. Prior to the creation of glass, the clarity and ease of splitting high-quality selenite crystals made them a commodity of considerable value in the ancient world.

In this absorbing documentary, Professor Juan Manuel García Ruiz of the Laboratory for Crystallographic Studies, University of Granada considers these unique natural wonders from both an historical and modern perspective. In pondering *The Mystery of the Giant Crystals*, his attention is focused primarily on why, when, and how they formed. Pursuing his fascination with giant crystals, he takes viewers on an extraordinary journey to visit four separate locales (in Spain, Chile, and Mexico) containing rich deposits of the largest—some more than 33 feet long, 3 feet wide, and weighing as much as 25 tons—and most beautiful selenite crystals known. As García Ruiz explores the world of giant crystals, he explains the nature of crystal structure, the environmental conditions in which such giant crystals flourish, and the various factors responsible for their creation and continued growth. His presentation is in clear, easily understood language that is quite suitable for a general viewing audience.

The crystal cathedral of Naica Mine

in northern Mexico has been referred to as the Sistine Chapel of crystallography...a name that is well deserved. Despite its relatively harsh environment (with temperatures of 122° F. and humidity approaching 100%), which limits the amount of time one can safely spend on site, stunning cinematography captures the breathtaking beauty of this singular geological treasure. Complementing images of Naica's underground splendor, laboratory analysis of mineral samples and realistic animations of past geological processes help to provide a geologic context for understanding the origin and growth of these crystals. This educational documentary will be of considerable interest to members of the caving community and is a highly recommended addition to the video collection of anyone intrigued by unique underground environments.

This DVD is accessible in three languages (English, French, and Spanish) with an option of five subtitle selections (English, French, Spanish, German, and Japanese). It was formatted for region 0, which is meant to be compatible with DVD players anywhere in the world. However, not all DVD players in the United States can play DVDs formatted for region 0. It is a good idea to check the specs on your DVD player prior to purchasing this video, so as to ensure compatibility with your system. Alternatively, the DVD can be viewed on a computer. Free VLC software can be downloaded from [videolan.org](http://videolan.org) to enable viewing.



Mike N. looking out from entrance of an Ark. cave. Photo by Scott Dankof.