

August 2012

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Scott Dankof

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## **INTERCOM**

Volume 48, Issue 4  
July – August 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 Oct. 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:** Jasen Rogers in Kemling Cave, Iowa. 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 4

## **C O N T E N T S**

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

October Grotto meeting – Oct. 24th, room 125, Trowbridge Hall.  
November Grotto meeting – to be held on the fourth wed. ( Nov. 28th)  
No December Grotto meeting due to the holidays.  
January Grotto meeting – Jan. 23rd, room 125, Trowbridge Hall. Presentation: Caving in Aruba and Bonaire.

Please welcome new Iowa Grotto members - John Maehl and Randal Reinertson.

IOWA GROTTO  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 25<sup>TH</sup> 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with six members present. No previous meeting minutes or treasurer's report were read. **TRIP REPORTS:** Recent trips to Kemling Cave (Dubuque Co.), Decorah Ice Cave, Coldwater Cave and Mushroom Cave (Winneshiek County) were reported. A trip to Mystery Cave (MN) was reported. Recent CRF expedition work at Mammoth Cave was also discussed. **FUTURE TRIPS:** Cave survey trips to Mystery Cave (MN) were noted. The grotto picnic is on schedule for Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>. The MSS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration is set for the third weekend in August. Coldwater Cave trips are also set for the third weekends in August and upcoming months. Doug Schmuecker will offer a vertical training session on Sept. 8-9<sup>th</sup> with a cave rescue session in October. **OLD BUSINESS:** Preparations for the upcoming Annual Grotto Picnic were detailed. Cave rescue callout protocols were discussed. **NEW BUSINESS:** Deb McCarty donated additional cave-related materials to the Grotto recently, some of which will go directly into the Grotto library, some will augment the Grotto Cave Rescue Cache at Coldwater, with the remainder of materials donated to the Grotto Auction for this year. With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Iowa Grotto  
Regular Meeting  
August 22, 2012

The regular meeting of the Iowa Grotto was called to order by Ed Klausner, at 7:35pm, with ten members present. Prior to the meeting, a potluck was enjoyed by all at Phil and

Gaylene's home. (Thank you!) Minutes of the June 27, 2012 regular meeting were presented.

**TRIP REPORTS:** John Donahue reported on a trip to Shoals, Indiana (July 4-5); a trip to Kemling (July 21); and a survey trip to Mystery Cave. Ed Klausner reported on a weeklong survey in MO on Indiana and Gray Bat hibernacula.

John Kirk reported on a weeklong restoration trip at Mammoth Cave.

**FUTURE TRIPS:** Ongoing survey trips to Mystery Cave. Contact Warren Netherton. Labor Day weekend-Mammoth Cave. September-Possible trip to Kemling.

**OLD BUSINESS:** September 8-Vertical Workshop. Contact Doug Schmuecker. October-Cave Rescue Training. Contact Doug Schmuecker.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None to report.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None to report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm. Submitted by Teresa Kurtz, Secretary.

Retired Caving

By Mike Nelson

(There is no intent to hurt anyone's feelings with this report, it is all about looking on the bright and humorous side of things.)

I realize that I have retired numerous times from caving while active at CWC. I had never done it in Arkansas, as the trips with the Iowa crew when they were down here have always been merciful. So I thought I might try retiring here also. As it looks at this point. It might not be necessary.

My 1st Arkansas organized trip was to a site a couple of counties away. The folks I've chosen to cave with have a particularly admirable quality. They like to get started early and in the cave early and not dink around forever, unlike some of my previous experiences in "The Natural State". Since I was not that familiar with where I had to be when, I crashed on the couch of the one who

would show me the way. He did ask if I might be willing to drive. I ended up driving...and driving...and driving... He had only been to the intended cave once before, as a passenger himself. I saw a scenic bit of Arkansas while driving 100 miles too much on what was normally a 200 mile trip to begin with. When bagging it became the only option, I chose a different road for the different scenery on the way back home. This route took us right by the meeting site, accidentally (and, of course, too late).

My 2nd "organized" trip was right up the road near Dog Patch. No lengthy drive this. We were on the site, suited up and in the cave by 8:30a.m.!!! That's when things started to slow down. The entrance is a large breakdown room that had either reached the surface or was reached by surface entrenchment. The member who had been in the cave before thought that the 3rd man and I were going too deep into the back of the room to search that far rear wall for the passage. As I didn't particularly like the looks of where I was being led, I opted to search elsewhere. I looked around the back of the room higher up the breakdown. I saw nothing that looked like a lead within the prescribed area. We all opted to push the one we had found.

This lead was mostly "scrambling" , in, up, down, over, around, through (crawling at best, of course). We didn't go that far when the other neophyte to the cave came to a minor restriction. He didn't want to push it if it was not the right path and the leader, right behind him, couldn't verify that. So we retraced our kneepad steps back through the breakdown to the more spacious breakdown room. There was another team supposed to show up shortly whose leader did know the cave well. So we perched on some breakdown where we were regaled with a recollection of what should be ahead. There was 45 minutes of that twisty, torturous breakdown scrambling to reach the point where we had

the pleasure of dropping into the wet part of the cave. Yes, all that we has put ourselves through had been in dry, warm cave with "Farmer John's" on. We sat there long enough for the others to start to cool. The other team was expected by now, but there was no sign of them. That's when I realized "Hey, it's still early!" I told the other two that after that description of what lay ahead, I really didn't think I had what it took to push this type of cave and that I still had time to get out and make contact with friends from Springfield. They had called the night before to see if we could join them hiking. I had to decline then because of this previous commitment.

I was out and changed before the other 2 had given up also. We talked about the next scheduled trip in 2 weeks and I was on my way. I had to drive in the direction the 2nd team would be coming from and never saw them. I called the Springfield folks and they had decided to stay at home and clean their garage instead. I took a nap without even cleaning up 1st. Then I did the minimal clean up that my gear required and took a shower before writing this trip report. Now that's retired caving! I'll get back after that trip in 2 weeks to let you know if retirement persists.

#### Across the Pit

Kemling Cave, Dubuque County, IA  
Chris Beck, John Donahue, Ed Klausner, Elizabeth Miller, Jim Roberts, Alex Zelenski, and Brandi Zinn  
July 21, 2012 By Ed Klausner

With very dry conditions and a pre-trip the week before by Chris and Jim to dig out the Whippy Dip, seven of us headed to the Land of Oz. The Grand Canyon was mostly dry, but the South West Arterial was quite wet. We slogged our way through and made it to the T junction in fairly good time.

Alex and Jim headed to the right

(west) to the dig while the rest of us headed left (east) to the pit. Chris had previously rigged the pit so we did not have to spend time doing that. While getting our vertical gear on, we found that Elizabeth, John and Brandi did not have much experience with a figure eight, so we spent a bit of time on the technique. Fortunately (?) the rope was stiff and we had to feed the rope through the figure eight, so getting out of control was not an issue. The idea was to drop down to a ledge and while still on rope, back across the pit while straddling it.

Once we were all on the other side, we broke up into two teams. Elizabeth, Brandi and I surveyed the main passage using 8 ½ by 11 graph paper since this goes quicker than the smaller survey pages. Chris and John surveyed the side leads. They finished the side leads at about the same time we reached the second, deeper pit that is 42 feet deep. Fortunately, this pit is more easily crossed and vertical gear is not needed. There were only a few survey shots on the other side, but the undisturbed formations were really beautiful. Unfortunately, many of the formations were broken by the miners in the 1800's.

On the way out, we surveyed two more side leads, one at the T intersection (which technically isn't a T since there is a short section at the top of the T) and one along the passage from the Whippy Dip to the T.

By then we had finished everything left to survey in the Land of Oz and headed out. Alex and Jim made good progress on the dig and are anxious to continue it since the air movement is very suggestive of more cave.

The following photo's are from Kemling Cave. Photo's by Ed Klausner.





