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Tom Hruska

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Vol. 9 #1

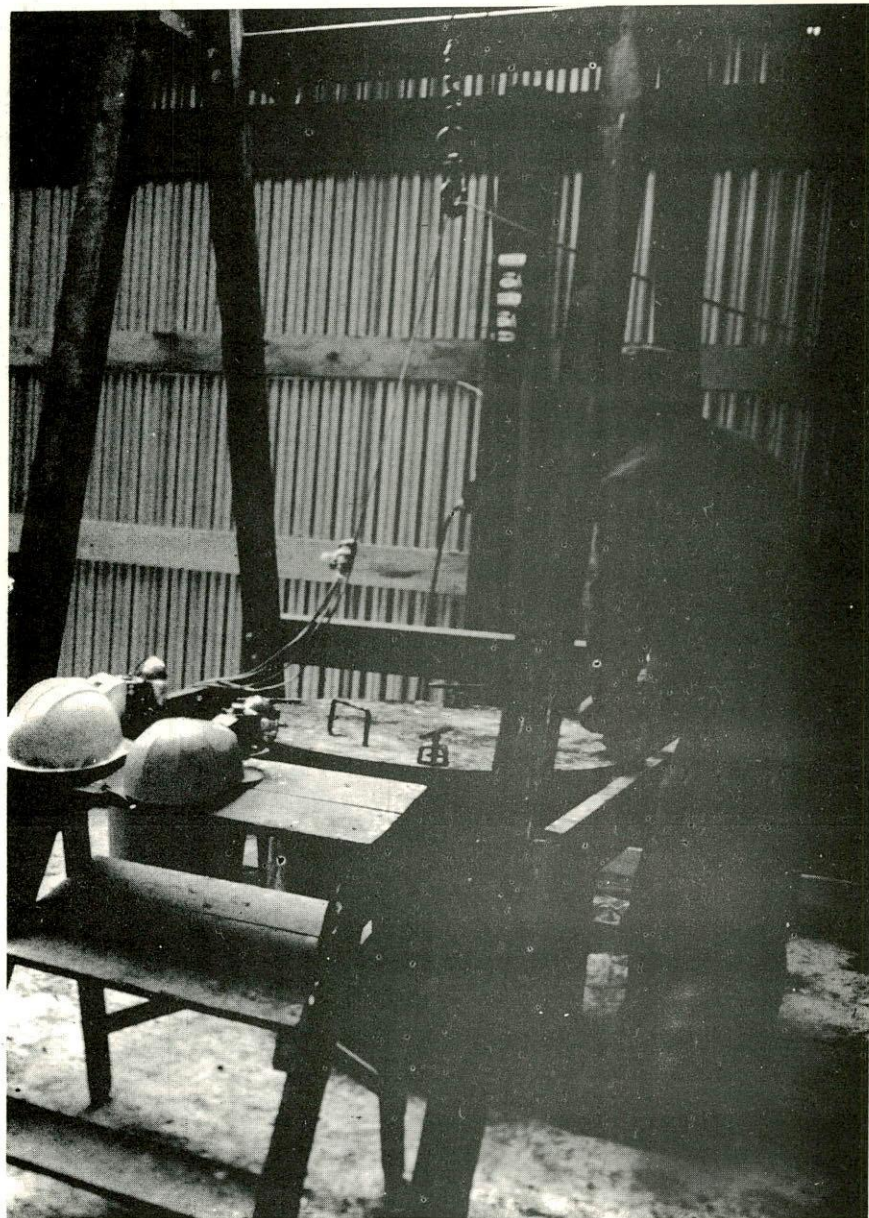
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THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society

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Volume IX Issue 1

January — February 1973

IOWA GROTTO INTERCOM
P.O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

The *Intercom* is printed in six issues each year by the Iowa Grotto, NSS. Subscriptions are \$2.50 for six issues, or free in exchange for similar publications of other grottos.

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COVER PICTURE: Cap on the entrance shaft to Cold Water Cave.

Photo by Steve Hurley



IOWA GROTTO
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Chairman - - - - - John Johnson
Vice-Chairman - - - Greg McCarty
Sec'y-Treas. - - - - - Tom Hruska

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GROTTO MINUTES AT A GLANCE

Thomas Hruska, Secretary

Regular Meeting January 10, 1973

Attendance: 8 members and 2 guests

Treasury: \$169.31

No formal meeting was held because of poor attendance. George Cain reported on the scientific trip to Cold Water Cave on December 20, 1972. Lowell Burkhead reported on a trip to Searyl's and Hatfield Caves. Greg McCarty made a trip to Alabama.

Regular Meeting January 24, 1973

Room 3407

Called to order: 7:35 PM

Adjourned: 9:40 PM

Attendance: 13 members and 4 guests

Treasury: \$168.31

John Johnson announced the names of club members that have been appointed to positions in the grotto. Grotto will purchase 165 feet of 11 mm Red Stripe climbing rope. Greg McCarty asked everyone to check the small town hardware stores for brass carbide lamps. The grotto must get more active in scientific studies and mapping of caves. Gary Linnevold and his friends from Decorah, Iowa, have been asked to join the Iowa Grotto. George Cain repeated his report from the previous meeting. Loren McVey reported on the press trip into Cold Water Cave on Monday, January 22, 1973. Tom Hruska and Greg McCarty made trip reports. Several future trips were announced. Art Parker and Loren Schutt presented slide programs.

Regular Meeting February 14, 1973

Room 3400

Called to order: 7:45 PM

Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Attendance: 10 members and 5 guests

Treasury: \$135.96

The Red Stripe climbing rope has been ordered. Gary Linnevold and his group are considering joining the Iowa Grotto. Received a letter about a cave lead near Garnavillo, Iowa. Geological samples from dead formations from Cold Water Cave will be studied at the University of Iowa. Kentucky Speleofest will be the weekend that the NSS Convention starts. Carson Davis offered to lead a three-day trip to Arkansas. Everyone is welcome to join George Cain's field trip to southwest Missouri. Grotto spring picnic was mentioned but no date set. Greg McCarty reported on a trip to Decorah. Greg announced a trip to Clayton or Allamakee Counties. Slide shows on caving safety and Cold Water Cave were presented.

Regular Meeting February 28, 1973

Room 3400

Called to order: 7:40 PM

Adjourned: 8:15 PM

Attendance: 15 members and 9 guests

Treasury: \$135.96

The Red Stripe belay rope has arrived for grotto use. Gary Linnevold wrote, asking about grotto services and dues. Garnavillo cave leads proved to be a series of closed sinks. Loren McVey told about a trip to the Ozark Underground Laboratory in Missouri. Samples taken from dead formations in Cold Water not yet identified. Arkansas trip will be April 21-23, 1973. George Cain's Missouri trip will be March 9-11, 1973. Grotto picnic was again discussed. Ballots for the NSS BOG have been mailed to members. Jack Leonard showed 16 mm movies of Cold Water Cave. George Cain presented slides from Ozark Laboratory and Ed Smith showed slides from his Alabama trip.

SAFETY COORDINATORS CORNER

Lowell Burkhead

"You Could Slip and Fall on your ..."

Cave mud can constitute a real hazard to those who don't know how to handle it. Iowa caves have some of the best quality mud to be found anywhere and it shouldn't be taken lightly.

There are several precautions that can be taken to avoid injury, the most important of which is to have the proper footwear. Boots with a deep tread, hard rubber sole and good ankle support should be used. It is especially important to inform the novice about footwear before he gets into a cave. Many of them show up with crape soles which are not only hazardous on mud but are down right dangerous on wet rocks. Tennis shoes are far superior to crape soled boots.

Even with good boots, a person can fall in the mud if he doesn't know how to walk in it. Step in the low places so there's no place to slip to. You might be walking in water but wet feet are more fun than a broken head. When walking where there is a definite hazard such as a mud slope, have a place picked out to fall. Balance yourself with a hand on a wall or up slope. Always use a hand line around pits where there's mud.

Remember, if you do fall and hurt yourself, don't bleed on the formations.

NEW YEARS DAY TRIP TO HATFIELD AND SEARRYLS CAVES

January 1, 1973

Lowell Burkhead

Dave Shields, Steve Vermillion, Kit Kelly, Vernon Rotert, Shirley Rotert, Terry Sires, Donna Sires, Fred Hoffer, and Lowell Burkhead

On Friday evening, Dave Shields called me to find out if there were any trips planned over the long weekend. I didn't know of any so we planned to have one if the ground froze to where we could get somewhere. It did Sunday so I called Dave. He wasn't home. He was taking a novice trip to Hunters Cave. He called me back Sunday night and we planned a trip to Searryls Cave for Monday morning, New Years day. We called around and found enough interested people for three car loads. Dave, Terry, and I drove. We were supposed to meet at my house at 11:00 AM but Dave called and said he would be late. He had forgotten the directions to my house and had to go back home after them. He was only a half hour late.

By eleven-thirty, we were on our way. I was supposed to lead to the cave but I wasn't sure I could find it. I had been there only once before over a year ago. After making only one wrong turn, we finally pulled in at the Hughes farm. Terry and I talked to Mr. Hughes for about ten minutes and got permission to see the cave. We discussed his cave, caves in general, bats, and politics, in that order.

It was a beautiful day for winter caving. It was about fifteen degrees above zero with bright sunshine and very little snow on the ground. All the mud was frozen but yet it wasn't too cold to live. We got bundled up and hiked the three-quarters of a mile to Searryls Cave.

The entrance was filled with ice stalagmites. Inside the cave, we noticed that the bat colony had decreased by at least twenty percent from a year earlier. This was probably due to banding. The mud was as bad as ever and some of us got in over our boots. We got back to the first dome room and the cavers in the group, there for the first time, were impressed by the room's size and beauty. The echo was fantastic. I had my harmonica along and it sounded like a pipe organ. A note would ring for several seconds without any discernible distortion. Everyone was singing and making other echoing noises. At least one bat took offense and cussed us good. We repeated our performance in the other dome room which is equally as large. We walked back to the cars and drove to Hatfield Cave which was just a few miles away.

We stopped at the Steve Supple farm and got permission from a Supple young lady to visit Hatfield Cave. The farm is quite a distance from the cave and there is some controversy over who owns the cave property. We drove back across the fields about a mile and parked the cars. There we ate lunch and then walked the half mile to the cave. There were ice formations in the entrance and the first room. One of them was almost five feet tall. We found a large bat colony and they weren't banded. Hopefully, people will leave them alone. There were at least three hundred and possibly as many as five hundred individuals in the colony.

Hatfield is a medium size Iowa cave with large features. The passage is thirty to seventy feet wide and four to twenty feet high. It goes for about four hundred feet. There are several very large rooms and a few large formations. There is a lot of cave popcorn and many small helictites. The cave was recently excavated for Indian relics and is heavily vandalized. Most of the damage was probably done by the Indians since the broken formations are starting to heal on the ends. Some have grown as much as an inch since they were broken.

Some areas of the cave would be worth-while for a photographic trip if anyone is interested. It would also be an excellent cave for a novice surveying trip.

As we walked back to the cars, we discussed going to see Wordens Cave but decided against it because of the time. We drove to Wyoming for gas and headed home.

LEAD CHECKING IN DELAWARE COUNTY

January 14, 1973

Greg McCarty

Lowell Burkhead, Terry Sires and Greg McCarty

Leaving Lowell's house at 12:30 PM, we started for nearby Delaware County to check some leads we had picked up on a previous trip. After talking with the farmer along highway 38 who had all the leads, we started out. Checking a few sinks on a ridge near a quarry produced nothing. The owner of the next lead wasn't home but a quick look at the area showed that the cave couldn't be where we were told. If it is there, it's in a hollow one-quarter mile from the farm.

We couldn't check a lead along Lake Delhi because the steep hills were just sheets of ice. We were unable to drive to it.

Deciding it was getting about that time, we headed for Route Three Cave. We saw all 150 feet of it and took some slides of the bats and large ice formations. We then headed home.

CINEMATOGRAPHY TRIP TO HUNTERS CAVE

January 18, 1973

Tom Hruska

Jack Leonard and Tom Hruska

On Sunday, January 14, 1973, the Iowa Grotto learned that the cinematographer for the Cold Water Cave press trip would be from the staff of KCRG-TV in Cedar Rapids. The person's name was not known, but the grotto felt that this person should be contacted and told about the problems of cave photography.

Over the years, the Iowa Grotto has made two attempts at cave movie-making. Al Jagnow has taken some footage and Gary Flickenger tried his hand at it as well. Both attempts came out poor. This trip will commence the third attempt at cave cinematography in Iowa.

On Monday morning, the KCRG Stations were contacted to learn that Mr. Jack Leonard would be the movie photographer on the Cold Water Cave press trip on Tuesday, January 23, 1973. Mr. Leonard was very happy to have suggestions made to him as well as answer his many questions on cave photography.

Arrangements were made for a discussion and slide program at the home of John Johnson. Mr. Leonard and I attended. John gave a short program of color slides showing different lighting conditions and techniques. The discussion started at John's house but soon moved to Loren McVey's place to learn more details about the area of the cave to be visited. The discussion lasted over three hours.

I suggested a trip to Hunters Cave to take some practice film before the attempt was made at Cold Water. Mr. Leonard thought the idea would be real helpful in learning to judge the lighting conditions of cave cinematography. A trip to Hunters was planned for Thursday morning, January

18, 1973.

Thursday morning found Mr. Leonard and I on our way to the Steinus farm to visit Hunters Cave. The owner had been previously contacted by telephone and he indicated it was not necessary to stop at the house before entering the cave. We arrived at the parking area near the cave about 9:30 AM. By ten o'clock the two of us were at the entrance.

After transporting the camera and lights into the Big Room, we took a quick tour of this room and the Pit Room. We then returned to the Big Room to take some light readings. The two Sylvania thirty volt cinema lights lit up areas of the cave that the caver doesn't see with a carbide or electric head lamp. A single movie light was found to be bright enough to take pictures up to about forty feet.

The first series of test pictures were of me wearing a wet suit in the Big Room. These pictures, after developing, showed nothing more than a face under a white hard hat, as had been expected. The same area was photographed with me wearing a red jacket. Mr. Leonard then took a shot of me walking past him, carrying a light, and continuing down the passage to go out of sight as I entered the Pit Room. The same shot was repeated but this time Mr. Leonard was using the second cinema light at the camera position. By this time, he had consumed the one hundred-foot role of film that was planned for test pictures.

Mr. Leonard decided to load a second one hundred-foot roll of movie film. We went to the Pit Room and Mr. Leonard filmed me climbing into the pit. Additional pictures were taken of me climbing into and out of some of the chambers that join the Pit Room. We took a shot of me climbing out of the pit before returning to the Big Room.

Back in the Big Room, Mr. Leonard started his third roll of movie film. We photographed a single bat hanging from the ceiling along with many very short sodastraws. While photographing the sodastraws, one sequence caught a drip falling from the bottom of a formation. We then packed up and made our way to the entrance.

At the entrance, we decided to take pictures of me entering the cave to add continuity to the movie sequence. The trip into the cave was staged twice so the scene could be photographed from two different camera angles. The sequence starts with me walking up to the entrance of the cave and grabbing the gate. The sequence then cuts to a view of me climbing down into the cave as I used the gate to stabilize myself. To complete the continuity of the film, we made a quick shot of me climbing out of the cave. We then made the long hike back to the car.

We stopped in Maquoketa for a quick lunch on our way home. We arrived back in Cedar Rapids in time to start processing the movie film around three o'clock in the afternoon. I went to the KCRG film lab to watch the finished film come out of the processing machine. Mr. Leonard and I were pleased to see the pictures as the machine was discharging the finished film.

Mr. Leonard analyzed the processed film to see what corrections would have to be made when he is photographing Cold Water Cave. The distant and medium range shots came out very good. He learned that the close-up shots would have to be planned very carefully in order to get proper lighting and focus.

The finished film sequence was good enough that KCRG-TV decided to run the pictures as part of their news cast. The movie was shown at 5:30 PM on Saturday, January 20, 1973, as a promotion for the press trip planned to Cold Water Cave on January 23, 1973.

The movie film taken at Hunters Cave will be available for Iowa Grotto use when we need it. The film has been placed in the KCRG-TV film library but will be loaned to the grotto on request.

COLD WATER CAVE PRESS TRIP

January 22-23, 1973

Loren McVey

Don Koch, Sam Tuthill, Otto Knauth, Jack Leonard, Jim Gritzner, Jay Hytone, Charles Wittman, Steve Barnett, and Loren McVey

Under the auspices of the Iowa Geological Survey, two trips were made into Cold Water Cave on January 22 and 23, 1973.

The trip on Monday, January 22, was primarily to check bait stations and to pick up cultures left on the biological trip of December, 1972. I am sure that a secondary reason was to give Dr. Tuthill the opportunity to see the cave prior to the hectic press trip of the succeeding day.

A party of four people entered the cave, through the almost 100-foot deep shaft. They were Dr. Sam Tuthill, Don Koch, Steve Barnett and myself. On that day we all went down using a rope (boat line) as a belay. Dr. Tuthill and Don Koch both used walking sticks. These proved to be fairly handy, especially when the water became stirred up. Steve and I both snubbed the use of the sticks and we both took a spill or two. (However, the next day - press day - we both managed to handle ourselves a little better.)

Upon reaching the bottom of the entrance shaft, Don Koch, the first person down, took air samples and determined that the carbon dioxide was down to 0.7%, well within Bureau of Mine Standards. Water temperature readings were also taken and the water temperature was four degrees colder than the air temperature - probably due to a thaw on the surface the preceeding week and the resultant runoff into Coldwater.

From the shaft we headed upstream, stopping along the way to check bait stations and make collections when fauna was spotted. We could not find all of the bait stations - nor all of the culture plates. We went upstream about 150 feet. Due to Bureau of Mine Standards, we could not proceed beyond this point. There is a large piece of ceiling that looks as if it is supported by nothing but air. (It is not something that would even attract the attention of a caver much less bother him, but it does

bother the Bureau of Mines.) On this upstream section there is one side-passage to the right.

From there we backtracked to the shaft and went downstream to the end of the Gallery, probably not more than a few hundred feet. We then left the cave, again using the rope for belay. Total time in the cave was probably less than four hours.

I wore my wool under my wetsuit. However, I found this much too warm. I was sweating the whole time. Nobody else wore wool. The next day I wore only the wetsuit and did not even zip it up the whole way and was more than warm enough for eight hours. I would say that without having to expend so much energy to stay warm on the underwater dive, and without staying in for more than 15-20 hours, wool is not a necessity in a cave of this type - in fact, it may be a hindrance.

My impressions of the cave after not having been in for one and one-half years and having never come in such a safe, easy way may be of some note. The cave looked smaller than I remembered it. The breakdown looked smaller and distances between major areas seemed much shorter. And obviously the cave did not seem near as forbidding. Much to my surprise, the beauty of the cave was as great or greater than I remembered.

On the second day, the size of the breakdown and passages seemed to grow and did not seem as small as the first day, however, distances still remained short and the beauty of the cave continued to grow. I was able to observe so many things that I had never noticed before.

Tuesday was press day. As on the previous day, Don Koch was first down the shaft and took air samples. It took at least one hour to get all the people and their gear, tons of it, into the cave.

The party split into two groups. One party, consisting of Otto Knauth, Jay Hytner, and Sam Tuthill, proceeded down stream the few hundred feet to the Gallery where Jay Hytner set up for still photos. Jay spent the whole day taking shots in the Gallery section and obtained some very nice photos, both color and black and white.

The rest of the party went upstream, again to the large block in the ceiling. Steve had gotten permission from Dr. Tuthill to explore the right hand side passage in this upstream section. So on the way back down stream Steve, Don Koch and I headed up the passage while the rest of the party waited for us. A little way up the passage some of the missing culture plates were found and recovered. Steve took the lead and moved out at a pretty good pace. Within 100-150 feet, the passage turned into a belly crawl. Don Koch and I probably went at least a few hundred feet up the passage. Steve went at least twice that distance. The passage was staying about the same size as far as Steve went. Due to lack of time we were forced back before getting to the end of the passage. However, we did notice some animal bones in the side passage, including the skeleton of a snake. (On a later trip Don Koch recovered the snake skeleton.)

Our entire party then went downstream to the Gallery. After about

six and one-half to seven hours in the cave, some of the people and supplies started heading out.

Otto Knauth, who had been in the gallery section all day, wanted to see the upstream section, so Steve, Otto, and I headed upstream, again to the block in the ceiling. We also went about 100 feet up the side passage to give Otto an idea what it was like. This little excursion took just a few ten's of minutes, but by the time we got back all the equipment was topside and so was everyone except Don Koch.

We then headed up. Time spent in the cave was about eight hours.

LEAD CHECKING NEAR DECORAH, VISIT TO SKUNK CAVE

February 10, 1973

Greg McCarty

Ed Smith, Gary Linnevold, Cynthia Norris, Wayne Patton and Greg McCarty

Wayne, Cindy, and I met Ed at Gary's house in Decorah. From there, we went east southeast for about 10 miles to check a cave Gary had found. We had a lot of trouble with Wayne's van on the icy hills, and almost got stuck once in a valley between two steep hills. The cave is a short distance back from the edge of a 40-foot bluff. There is a creek at the base of the bluff. It's in a timber area where there are other sinks, but they are plugged. The cave starts out as a crevice, easily chimneyed even with the ice and snow, 20 feet long, three feet wide and 20 feet deep. This crevice shows some solution, and it parallels the bluff face. A hole at the bottom goes down a dirt and rock slope through one wall of the crevice, toward the bluff. After going seven feet, you come to a pit and a side passage. The side passage goes ten feet to a small room you can stand up in. There was hot air blowing out of a hole in this room, and it appears there is a den of coons in the hole. There is much evidence of solution here and near the pit. The pit drops 30 feet down to water, and is a reasonably easy chimney. The walls have a little mud on them. When Gary was here before, he could see passage with air in it. Before we went up there, however, there was a thaw. The passage was evidently now flooded. Ed Smith and I were the only ones in the cave, and Ed wasn't in the proper mood at all for it. He had a lot of trouble getting through the small hole at the bottom of the first pit. I was uncomfortable while chimneying in the second pit. So we left, as there was probably little to be gained by staying longer that day. We believe, however, that the cave needs more checking in dryer weather. The water level in the cave is evidently lower than the creek outside.

After going back to Decorah to eat, we left for Bluffton to get a location from a man that lives there. He wasn't there at the time, but was going to return shortly. So we went on over to the famous Bluffton store and waited there. Ed and Wayne talked to a local resident, while I was beating Gary in a game of 8 Ball. When the man arrived, we headed east to some land he owns along the Upper Iowa River. The directions to the cave turned out to be nearly correct. We in our zeal, went too far up the ridge though. The cave was supposed to be near the cabin, and

two thirds the way up the hill. It was near the cabin, but only one third to one half the way up. Searching at two thirds the way up mainly, though going down to one half and up to the top, we searched down the ridge until it ended. We then looked in the other direction for one half mile. Though we were split up, all parties decided we couldn't find it. So we headed down the slope to the road to make better time back to the car. Part of the slope was bluff, so I climbed back up and helped Ed rig a rope. Wayne climbed down using the rope, and Ed body rappeled down. I rearranged the rope and belayed Cindy down then moved the rope over to a higher bluff and body rappeled down. Meanwhile, back at the cars, Gary had found the cave. After we all gathered at the entrance, he chimneyed down in. It was a 25-foot deep crevice about 100 feet long at the bottom. Just a hillside slip, with the usual amount of loose rock.

After we got back to the cars, Ed and Gary wanted to go home. So I discussed with Gary the idea of forming a branch of the Iowa Grotto in Decorah. A regional sub-chapter of the grotto. I explained the offer the grotto was making and Gary agreed it was a good idea. The exact details were to be worked out at a later date.

With this out of the way, Wayne, Cindy and I headed for Kendallville and Skunk Cave. This was Cindy's first cave. The first chimney had ice on the walls, but Cindy learned how to chimney real fast. She got around very well, for her first time. Wayne also had little trouble, though he hadn't chimneyed before. We saw most of the cave, including the water passage which was quite wet. Chimneying back up the ice covered walls proved to be little harder than coming down, but if you hurried and used a lot of pressure you could make it. Charging out into the night, we packed away our gear and headed home. Thus ending another enjoyable trip, into the wilds of northeast Iowa. One of these days I'll go on a trip when I'm not sick, so I'll get to enjoy the trip also. As usual, lately, this was not the case for this trip.

A CAVING EXPERIENCE IN HUNTERS CAVE

February 18, 1973

Mary Ellen Chudacek

Members of the Iowa City Community Theatre and guides from the Iowa Grotto

I have been hearing about caving for almost two years, and it sounded interesting. Recently a trip was organized for members of Iowa City Community Theatre by John Johnson, Bob Lehman and Tom Hruska. After "a little friendly persuasion", I went with this group on my first cave trip - through Hunter's Cave near Maquoketa, Iowa.

The drive from the county road to the cave over the rough and frozen land was enough to scare any novice away. After enjoying a sack lunch and a snowball fight, all sixteen of us checked our gear and proceeded to enter the cave - a hole in the ground!

As soon as I entered the cave, my glasses steamed up completely. Needless to say, because of that and the total darkness in the cave, I

could see nothing at all. My first impression was that it was very dark and kind of "eerie". All I could see was a little light from the entrance on one side and the small dots from flashlights on the other side. My first thought, especially after not being able to see, was, "What in the world am I doing in this cave - I must be out of my mind!" To top it off, a very nice and well-intentioned Mr. Hruska very helpfully explained some of the dangers of caving to me while I was regaining my bearings and couldn't yet see in the dark.

They said once you get muddy, it's all right, and it didn't take long to get muddy. From the main entrance room we proceeded toward the Skull Room. The first major obstacle, after many smaller ones, was Rupture Rock. At this point my girl friend, on whom I was planning to lean for moral support and courage, decided she had had enough, and turned back and left the cave. From here on, I was "brave" all by myself.

After crawling and sliding over and through many small openings we reached the Skull Room. My concept of a "room" and the cavers' concept of a "room" proved to be two different things. I had been looking forward to a big place in which we could stand up and move around. No such luck! We found a small area in which we could either crouch or sit. There wasn't any skull here, either!

Here it was time to turn back and go on to something else. We retraced our steps to the main room. Going back did not seem as difficult or as long an experience as coming in had been. Coming back up over Rupture Rock, my foot got stuck. I told one of the guides my foot was stuck, and I couldn't get up over the rock. Very matter-of-factly he said, "Well, it shouldn't be." I twisted around some more and got unstuck - no problem. The last few feet were the longest and the hardest of all because by now my muscles were very tired and rebelling.

Once back in the Main Room we sat down to rest and wait for the others to catch up. We shut off our flashlights and there was total darkness. All we could hear was water dripping on rocks and the sounds of people breathing. It was peaceful and almost like another world. It was restful, but strange.

From the Main Room some went on to other "rooms". I became an observer and waited with a few more tired "cavers" for the others to come back. My enthusiasm (and courage) for small spaces and not knowing what was over the next rock or through the next hole was beginning to wane.

Finally we got outside. It was nice to get out of the cave, and into the cold and snow and fresh air - above ground.

In spite of everything, this experience reminded me of a TV commercial - "Try it, you'll like it." Like the man in the commercial, I tried it and I did like it. On the day after the cave trip, I could quote the commercial again. "I tried it, and I thought I was going to die." My muscles were protesting, and my knees and shins were all bruised and I was very sore and very tired from head to toe. And I had to go back to work.

Even after, or because of, all this I would like to go caving again. I do need to study definitions of terms, though (deep, room, etc.). I am told now that "wet" isn't until the water is three feet deep!

P.S. There were no monsters, no worms that glow in the dark, no snakes, and I didn't see any bats!

LEAD CHECKING IN CLAYTON COUNTY

February 18, 1973

Greg McCarty

Terry Sires, Lowell Burkhead, Jim Blecker, Cynthia Norris, and Greg McCarty

The grotto received a letter from Arnold Roggman, in Garnavillo, saying that he owned a large amount of timber that had sinks in it. He'd gotten word that we were in the area last summer and wanted to help us look for caves on his farm. I called him and arranged for us to meet him on Sunday to check the leads on his property. Robert Stitt, Chairman of the NSS Conservation Committee, was supposed to join us but he came down with the flu at the last minute.

Mr. Roggman was very friendly and showed us the sinks he knew of plus a small crevice cave. The sinks were all plugged to varying degrees. The crevice cave was only 15 feet long, at most. We checked a lot more of his timber, by tramping, and found several other sinks. These were also plugged. It appears that you have the same situation here, as you have four miles south along the same ridge. Most of the sinks are in series, down the length of ravines. All the sinks are plugged, except for a few, and the ravines could be collapsed cave passage.

A large amount of till is present here, silting up whatever caves might have been enterable before. The Galena dolomite is riddled with sinks here because of the accelerated solutional activity associated with the volume of water flowing off the nearby ridge of Maquoketa shale.

Mr. Roggman had done some other checking around for us and gave us a list of leads. After eating in Guttenburg, we started off to check a lead on the Rudy Kines farm near Pine Hollow. This is northwest of Littleport. He wasn't at the farm we checked, so we headed back a couple miles to some sinks we spotted along the road. The farmer said that two were enterable but that no one had been in them. Encouraged by this, we quickly got our gear and checked them out. Three of the sinks were enterable, with a little digging on a couple of them. Jim Blecker entered one that turned out to be just dirt, even though he got out of sight in it. I entered another which ended in a dirt fill after ten feet. The third one was a real cave. The sink was five feet wide and ten feet deep. I dug open the hole at the bottom until it was big enough to fit through, then rigged the rope and belayed Terry Sires down it. He chimneyed down the twenty five foot deep pit and explored the virgin cave beyond. At the top of the pit, it was a mixture of mud and rock. It was mud covered rock the rest of the way down. The passage at the bottom was two and one-half feet wide and seven feet long. An impassable hole was at each end, and a tiny stream flowed at one end.

The cave is developed in the upper part of the Galena dolomite. We decided to name the cave Elephants Asshole. Idea courtesy of Lowell, of course.

Wasn't that ridiculous, writing that much about such a small cave? It was Terry's first virgin cave, however, so he wanted a big write up. He was quite muddy when he came out and Cindy got some good pictures. The better part of the day was gone by now so Lowell and Terry left because they weren't feeling well.

I talked to the farmer, and learned where Rudy Kines lived. After arriving at the Kines' farm, Mr. Kines didn't think we should try to find the cave then because he figured it would be covered over with snow. Deciding not to argue, I said we would come back in the spring.

Cindy, Jim, and I then headed for West Union and Sowards Cave. The owner wasn't home, so we went a few miles south to Duttons Cave County Park. The park entrance was gated, lucky for us, but it's not a very long walk to the cave. It was a little hazardous though, as the road was coated with ice and capped with snow. The water in the lake passage was low enough, and the water was frozen for 12 feet in. You could lay on the three quarter inch thick ice and look ahead for 20 feet. We didn't care to jump in, however.

We had a lot of trouble walking back up the steep hill to the car. The thick ice with its snow cap made it very difficult to make any progress. If the gate hadn't been closed the car would have slid out of control into a tree, or worse, if we had attempted even the start of the hill.

Nothing interesting happened on the way back, except the whole back side of one of my molars fell off. So much for another successful (?) Iowa Grotto trip.

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