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## Intercom, Volume 15, No. 2, March-April 1979

John Johnson

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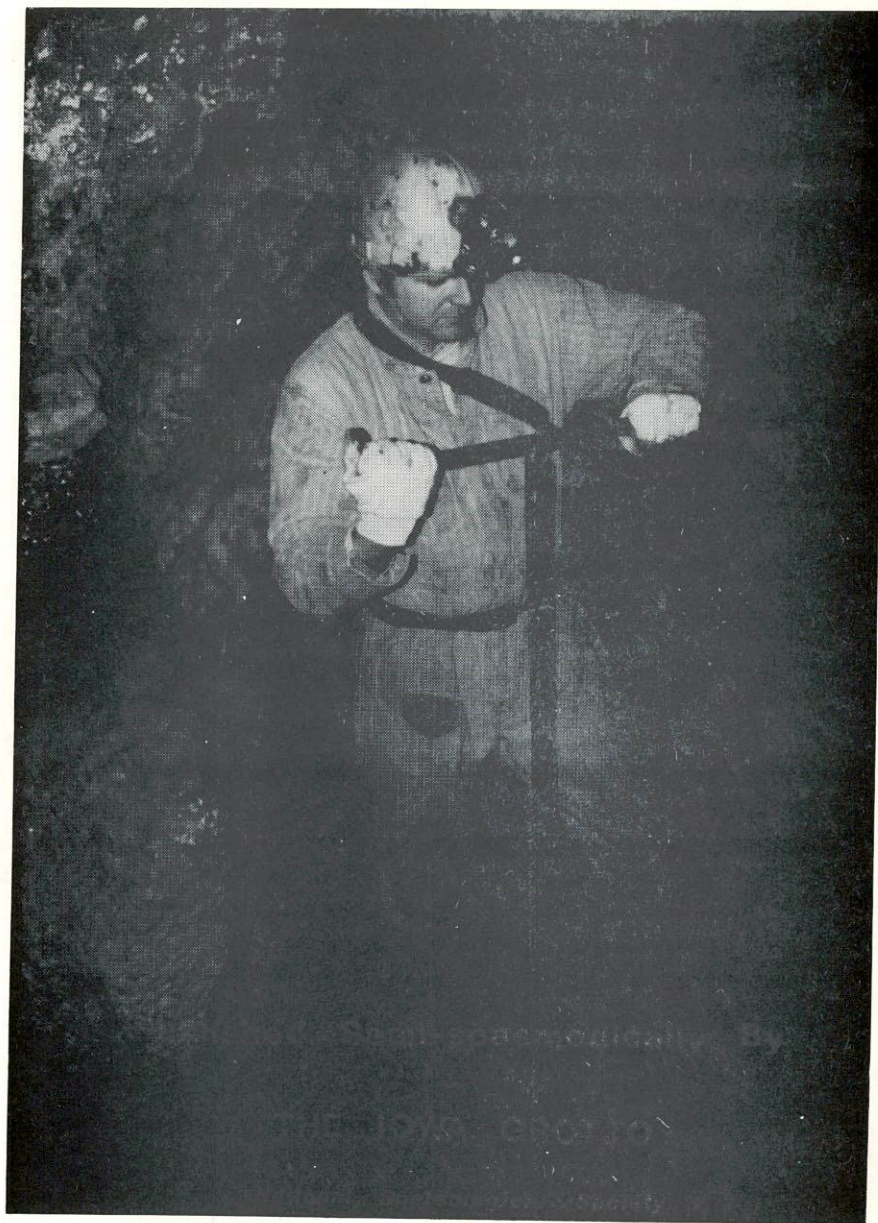
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# **I N T E R C O M**

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*National Speleological Society*



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COVER PICTURE: Barry Schuman drilling a core soil sample in  
Sowards Cave

Photo by Mike Bounk

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Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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## GROTTO MINUTES AT A GLANCE

Thomas Hruska, Secretary

## Regular Meeting March 14, 1979

Room 3400                      Called to order: 7:40 PM                      Adjourned: 9:10 PM  
 Attendance: 8 members and 7 guests                      Treasury: \$121.54  
 John Johnson made a motion to use the money donated from the Hruska memorial fund to add to the Grotto library. The motion was seconded and passed. The North Country Region will have a meeting in Illinois this summer. Two trip reports were given. Greg McCarty told about his trip to Floyd County in an attempt to locate Jessie James Cave. Mike Bounk reported on his visit to Sowards Cave.

## Regular Meeting March 28, 1979

Room 3400                      Called to order: 7:45 PM                      Adjourned: 8:05 PM  
 Attendance: 6 members and no guests                      Treasury: \$127.29  
 The North Country Region meeting will probably be in either June or July although no meeting dates have been announced. The current issue and two back issues of the Intercom are ready for typing. Editor Tom Hruska wants to have three more back issues ready before going to press. Mike Bounk gave a trip report on his visit to Cold Water Cave. Mike announced a future trip to Mystery Cave by the Minnesota people. After the meeting, Mike presented a slide show of Cold Water Cave pictures.

## Regular Meeting April 11, 1979

Room 3407                      Called to order: 8:00 PM                      Adjourned: 8:55 PM  
 Attendance: 6 members and no guests                      Treasury: \$131.29  
 The Thirtieth Anniversary picnic was again discussed. Greg McCarty has recieved some feedback from grotto members. He reported the people are leaning toward the Duttons Cave location. The Kentucky Speleofest will be May 25 - 28 in an area south of Louisville, Kentucky. Two trip reports were given. Greg McCarty reported on the Recreation Department trip to Maquoketa Caves and Hunters. Mike Bounk told about the trip to Minnesota Mystery Cave. A number of future trips were announced.

## Regular Meeting April 25, 1979

Room 3400                      Called to order: 7:50 PM                      Adjourned: 8:30 PM  
 Attendance: 6 members and 1 guest                      Treasury: \$130.29  
 Vice-Chairman Barb am Ende reported she has ordered NSS slide shows for the first grotto meeting ~~for~~ each of the next four months. The program "Caves of Oregon" will be shown at the May 9, meeting. Further discussion was presented concerning the Thirtieth Anniversary fall picnic. Grotto members voted to use the Duttons Cave location.

A SNOWBOUND TRIP TO FLOYD COUNTY

March 4, 1979

Greg McCarty

Mike Bounk, Lowell Burkhead, Debbie Beyer, Scott Lemke (and friend), Mike Gerald's, Barbara Torney, Ken Blaszik, Bob Wahlstrom (and friend), Barb am Ende, and Greg McCarty.

We had quite a crew for this trip even though a few people canceled out. I didn't know Floyd County was so popular. As it turned out, we should have all stayed home. Everyone except Bob Wahlstrom (and friend) and Barbara Torney gathered at Lowell's house for the final consolidation of vehicles. We were to pick up Barbara Torney on our way through Floyd, and meet Bob at the cave later in the day. Everything went smoothly at first, traveling four in Scott's car and five in Lowell's Beast we soon reached Charles City where we stopped for breakfast. While driving through Charles City, we pulled alongside a car driven by Scott's dad. We got his attention and he joined us in the cafe. Like us, he was just passing through and our paths crossed at the right time.

After breakfast we stopped in Floyd to pick up Barbara Torney, then proceeded on to Jessie James Cave. Floyd County is around one hundred and sixty or seventy miles from Iowa City. Pretty far for a one day trip, so we planned to do a lot and make use of our time. The plan was to show the cave to the people who hadn't seen it, push a wet passage, do some digging in a filled lead, and make a map of the cave. Any time left over could be used to show people one or more of the neighboring caves. As it turned out we had lots of time, but nothing to do with it. When we got to the owner's house, he wasn't home. A neighbor was there picking up a piece of scrap metal, so I talked with him to see if he knew of any caves in the area we didn't know about. He didn't know of any, so while every one was working on their gear, I walked out to see what the cave was like. This had been a hard and very snowy winter, and the cold winds and light snow on this day let us know that it hadn't given up yet. Some warm weather during the week had me a little worried, making me afraid the cave might be wet from all the snow melt. What a joke! I marched across the fragil crust, usually breaking through up to my knees, and tried to locate the entrance sink. It soon became apparent that we were in trouble. Only one of the several sinks in the vicinity was marked by a dip in the snow, the rest were leveled off. The surface was smooth despite the fact that I was walking across fifteen foot deep sinkholes. You could barely tell where some of the sinks were, but the smooth white-out surface made telling where the entrance might be very difficult indeed. After I had taken a look at what little there was to see, I was joined by Mike Gerald's and Debbie. I felt that I had probably located the right sink, you could tell it was a sink because it was a big area of smooth snow with no dirt from the plowed field sticking through, but we split up to see if we could get any more land marks to judge from. I tried to locate the sink containing the entrance to Wilson Cave, but the sink was so covered over that I could find no trace of it. When we got back to the sink I thought was the right one, we were joined by Mike Bounk and Barbara Torney. Mike Bounk had been to the cave last fall, and he agreed with my choice of sinks. I used Mike Gerald's army entrenching shovel to start digging through the hard crust, while Mike Bounk went back to the vehicles to get his. I estimated we would have to dig about fifteen feet down in order to get into the cave.



A seemingly endless task with just an entrenching shovel. The wind was pretty strong, and it was quite chilling if you weren't digging. I loaned Debbie my stocking cap, and suggested that Barbara Torney go back home until later in the day when we might have it dug open. She wasn't dressed warm enough to stand around anywhere near that long.

How long would it take to dig through that much snow? And, what if we missed the entrance? Nagging questions, but we had driven too far to just give up. Other people showed up off and on, and we took turns digging. Mike Bounk's shovel developed a loose blade, and became difficult to use. After a while, Ken showed up with an old weather beaten shovel he had found leaning against a building. I took about five scoops with it before the rotten handle snapped in two. Just what I was afraid of, but since Ken had brought it all the way out there I tried it anyway. Later in the afternoon the owner's son returned, so I showed him the shovel and told him what had happened. He was completely unconcerned, and wouldn't take anything for it. It wasn't worth more than what the rusty blade was worth, anyway.

We were making some progress, slowly but surely, and it was getting harder to remove the chunks of snow dug up. At least you were out of the wind in the hole. Everyone else wandered back to the vehicles, Lowell never left them because he wasn't feeling up to it, leaving the digging to Mike Bounk and me. We figured that someone would come out to spell us after a while, but no one ever did.

When I had gone back to the farmhouse with the broken shovel, I brought back a long steel rod from the scrap metal pile. Using it to probe the bottom of our hole, I tried to figure out where to dig. I hit bottom, and found it to be mud. It was deepest toward the east end of our hole, but I couldn't find anything that felt like the entrance. It was getting too deep to throw the snow out from the bottom of the hole, so we made a ledge. I would put a bunch of snow on the ledge, and Mike would throw it out of the hole while I stood out of the way. I eventually had the tops of some weeds showing through, and finally broke into a small air pocket that warm air had melted. Mike was getting pretty tired, so he went back to the vehicles to see what was happening. It turned out that nothing was happening until he got there, then our Grotto Chairman and Vice-Chairman were doing some grabbing (of each other). Never know what you'll miss if you spend all day in a hole out in the snow.

Meanwhile, back at the hole things were coming to a head. I would soon know whether we had gotten lucky and struck the cave, or whether this was just an interesting afternoon of digging in the snow. It was a lot slower going without someone to help get rid of the snow, but I was still making progress. One time when I was near the top of the hole, throwing snow out, I saw Scott walking over to another sinkhole. I waved at him and tried to get him to come over and help. When he got there, I found out that Bob Wahlstrom and his friend had shown up. They felt the cave was in another sinkhole much farther west, and a little south, and were digging there. They had a grain scoop, and were able to make far faster progress. They wanted to use the rod for probing, so I gave it to Scott and told him to bring back the grain scoop. When Scott returned with the scoop we were able to make rapid progress, and I broke into one end of another air pocket.

This one actually big enough to fit into for a body length. Just then Ken showed up with the rod, and said they needed the scoop again. I protested that I had hit an air pocket, and that they were in the wrong sink (it later turned out they hadn't been in the cave in fifteen years), but Ken said they had hit rock and mud and thought they had it. I used the rod to probe my air pocket, but could find nothing but mud. Scott and I wandered on over to the other sink to see what they had going. I jumped down in the hole to help Ken probe, and found no rock. What they thought at first was rock, actually was fence wire. The entrance to the cave has no wire in it. This wasn't the right sink. Everyone wandered back to the other sink, and I dug open the air pocket enough to crawl in. I couldn't find any place to go, and probing produced only mud. I'm certain we were very close to the entrance, just too close to the west end of the sink. The owner's son thought the same thing.

More digging with the scoop shovel, tunneling east, probably would have gotten us into the cave before the day was over, but Bob Wahlstrom and his friend wanted to leave. No one else had much (any?) enthusiasm for more digging, so we gave it up. I did some digging by hand in the sink that had the ten-foot deep dip in the snow, uncovering a little air pocket but getting nowhere. Barb and I spent a little sliding on our backs down the frozen slopes of this sink, about breaking my body once when I broke through the crust at high speed with Barb on top of me, then we headed home. The closer we got to home, the more the snow was turning into ice pellets. The roads got quite slippery, and we saw numerous accidents and cars in the ditch. We made it without incident, though, except for a delay in Cedar Rapids due to an accident on a bridge. Lowell's group also made it home with no trouble.

D



M.J. Bounk



## SOWARDS CAVE TRIP

March 10, 1979

Michael Bounk

Scott Lemke, Berry Schuman, Loren Schutt, Mark Schutt, Mary Schutt, Malinda Thielman, and Mike Bounk.

About 7:35 AM, I met Malinda, Loren, and Mark, Mary, and Timothy, Loren's children, at the Iowa City K-Mart parking lot. We then drove to West Union, where we met Scott and Berry at Humphry's Cafe at 10:15 AM.

After Malinda, Loren, Mark, Mary, and Timothy had eaten breakfast, we drove as close as we could to the cave. From there we loaded our equipment on a toboggan and hauled it to the head of the ravine, where the cave is located. We then discovered that the entire ledge, which must be crossed to reach the cave, was covered with snow. Loren was able to dig a path across the ledge. However, because of a massive drift on the other side, we decided it would be safer to find another route to the cave.

While I went back to the vehicles for two short lengths of Bluewater rope, Loren, Scott, and Berry located a route down the west side of the ravine. Loren then returned to the top of the ravine. After lowering the equipment by rope to Berry and Scott, he showed the rest of us the route to the cave.

We finally entered the cave about 1:00 PM. While Scott, Malinda, Loren, Mark, Mary, and Timothy visited the cave, Berry and I drilled a number of holes with a hand auger in the fill at the back of the main level. We also measured and collected samples from the fill which comprises the east wall of this room. Hopefully, an analysis of these samples will help us determine the age of this fill. Berry and I then visited the main part of the upper level.

At 4:30 PM, we exited the cave and hauled the equipment and samples up the drop near the cave and back to the vehicles. We then returned to West Union and after eating supper at Humphry's returned home.

As on the previous trip this winter, a large number of Big Brown Bats were seen. The total number appears to be about the same as on the earlier trip, although I think the smallest of the three clusters has dispersed somewhat. The clusters were in the same locations as last trip, with one or two small clusters and one or two solitary bats closer to the entrance. We also saw some Phippenstrels in the back room.

## MARCH COLD WATER TRIP

March 17 &amp; 18, 1979

Michael Bounk

Pete DeVries (expedition leader), Jim Klager, Dr. Warren Lewis, Brad Olson, Berry Schuman, Greg Scherf, Mike Temple, and Mike Bounk.

After eating breakfast in Manchester, Iowa, Mike and I arrived at the lane to the Cold Water Shaft entrance shed about 11:00 AM. We saw only two vehicles parked along the road, and the lane and field were impassable. Therefore, we assumed that everyone was in Harmony. However, when we checked at the cafe, we learned that only four people had been in and that was two hours earlier. We then went to the shed where we found Dr. Lewis, Greg, Berry, and Jim.



At 12:30 PM Berry, Jim, and Greg entered the cave, planning to head downstream and tie the Dead Coon Passage survey into the main stream passage. Mike, Dr. Lewis, and I entered the cave about 1:00 PM and headed upstream to the breakdown pavement, just downstream from the Jumping Off Point. We installed a fence around the Crinoids located on one of these slabs. This fence consists of six uprights of 1/8" diameter aluminum wire weighted down with rocks, and flagging tape strung between them. These materials should not deteriorate rapidly, and thus should not alter the cave environment, while at the same time protecting these fossils from being walked on. After taking some pictures, we returned to the shaft about 3:00 PM. Dr. Lewis left the cave at this time, and Mike and I headed downstream.

We continued downstream, stopping occasionally to take pictures, until we reached a passage in the left wall about 4,700 feet upstream from the entrance sump. We then headed into this passage, which is a dirt filled high passage varying from walking to crawlway. Finally we reached a heavily decorated dome, which Mike had visited on an earlier trip. This dome is located a distance up a crawlway in the right wall of the dirt filled passage. This crawl is marked by a racoon skeleton. After Mike photographed the dome, and we had changed carbide, we started back upstream at 7:00 PM. During our trip upstream, we noticed an increase in water turbidity, level, and the current. We also noticed an increase in the flow of some of the feeder streams.

When we exited the cave at 11:00 PM, we met Berry, and Dr. Lewis, and learned that Brad, and Pete had arrived during the day and had been working on the stove.

Berry, Jim, and Greg had surveyed from the Dead Coon Passage upstream for 300 - 400 feet in the main passage in order to tie the Dead Coon survey into the main passage. Unfortunately, the chip at the Dead Coon Passage had been washed away by high water. Then they surveyed a high dirt filled passage, located on the left side of the main stream passage, to a T intersection. They then surveyed the left branch of the T to the main stream passage. From the main passage to the T this is walking passage with a "sucking mud" floor. The left fork of the T is a low dry crawl, while the right branch which was not pushed is relatively narrow and high. They returned to the surface about 9:30 PM.

The next day, after checking the stream level and finding that it had risen several inches, we headed to Decorah for breakfast. After breakfast, Mike and I returned to Iowa City, stopping a number of times to look for carbide lamps (unsuccessfully), and to observe a number of hogs running loose in downtown Edgewood. We finally reached Iowa City at about 3:00 PM.

#### RECREATION DEPARTMENT CAVE TRIP

March 18, 1979

Greg McCarty

Barb am Ende, Greg McCarty, two staff members, and twelve university students

I made contact last fall with the University's Recreation Department about a cave trip they planned to run. They had a local doctor who knew



about Hunters, and were quite happy to find someone who was much more knowledgeable. I had several meetings with them, and planned a trip to Maquoketa Caves State Park and to Hunters. Using numerous slides borrowed from Mike Bounk and Barb, plus a few that I have, I gave a talk to the people going on the trip. I showed them examples of the different types of caves we have in Iowa, gave them the usual information on conservation and safety, and explained briefly how the caves got there. Barb came to the talk to help answer questions.

The weather was good the day of the trip, although we would have a little trouble with the very present snow cover trying to melt. Our first stop was Maquoketa Caves. As soon as you got out of the car you could hear the roaring of water, as the stream flowing through Dancehall was swollen. Later in the day you could hear it even in the car. I was using Maquoketa Caves as the sight for explaining many things about the formation of caves and karst, and would use Hunters as the main spelunking part of the trip. We had a little trouble getting into the upper entrance of Dancehall, since the stream covered the sidewalk and most of the floor. On the extreme right, though, was a narrow strip that you could crawl along on your hands and knees. We were able to follow this until we reached some rocks, then use them to reach the sidewalk where it surfaced. I ran most everyone through the Bat Passage, including Barb, so people got a nice surprise when they peeked out the other end and had to be helped down. Several bat colonies were present in the Bat Roost, they appeared to be Big Brown Bats. From the center entrance we went through the Balcony, then climbed down through a little side passage back to the main passage. The Steel Gate Passage was next, and it was very dry. No bats present though. We made the loop, and down the chimney. Some people were a little hesitant here, but all agreed that it was easier than it looked. Most of the ice formations were gone from the downstream entrance, but there were still a few eroded ones left. Tourist Delight was flowing quite strongly.

We jumped across the stream by the entrance to Rainy Day Cave. A few people had some trouble and got their feet wet, or even more. Rainy Day had only a couple of bats in it. Barb tried to make the climb to the upper level, but discovered that it's harder than it looks. When we recrossed the stream a few more feet were wetted, some were rewetted. I explained the relationship of Barbell Cave to the rest of the caves in the park as we went by, then it was up to the restrooms above Wye Cave. Wye Cave had only a tiny stream running in the entrance, but the nearest sinkhole to the cave had some water running into it. We went only as far as the little pool you have to crawl through on your belly. The cold water would have made the rest of the trip miserable for everyone, and we had a long way to go yet.

The Rec. Dept. provided a lunch for us, but they only brought rye bread for some reason. About five loaves of rye bread, and no wheat or white. Barb and I are not big fans of rye bread.

It didn't take us long to get to Hunters, although we had a little trouble walking back to the cave because we had to find places to cross two flooded ravines. Once we got through the pines there was a clay stained path through the snow to the entrance. Hunters turned out to be quite dry as well. The usual pools near the Paradise Room and in the Canyon Room were gone, but there was still some water in the maze. We made a quick loop of the Main Room, just to get everyone acclimated, then we all posed for Barb



to take a picture. Eventually someone showed her how to use her timer and we finally got the pictures out of the way. After taking a look at the Pit Room, everyone went over Rupture Rock and back to the Skull Room. Several people did some climbing around in the Canyon Room, but only a couple of them succeeded in getting into the little side room without taking the loop crawlway. Barb and I stayed in the Canyon Room the whole time, Climbing around near the ceiling. When we got back to the Pit Room we split up. Barb had never been back to the fossil room, so she led a group there. I took the rest over to the Paradise Room. In several parts of the cave we found some maps and sheets with questions on them. Evidently from a class someone is traching on littering.

I took my group through the Paradise Room and into the passages beyond it, then we came out and played around in some small holes and behind the breakdown pile. Barb brought her group back to the Pit Room, having a little trouble staying out of the Maze, but had to stop and work on her lamp. I decided to take all who would follow me into the Flat Room, and proceed into the Maze from there. I had never gone this way, and had only seen part of the Maze from the other direction. At any rate, it had been at least four years since I had been in the cave at all. I remembered from the map that there was a route through to the Pit Room, and I was sure I could find it with a little trial and error. After I had led the group through a pool of water and a few minor squeezes, I could hear a lot of grumbling. Hoping that they didn't have to go back the way we had come, and not very confident that I would find the way through. We got a little spread out, in spite of my instructions to stay together, and had to wait until the others could hear our voices and catch up. We were at a point where I didn't know where to go anyway. I was sure we were near the Pit Room, But checked all of the wrong passages before I located the right one. I believe some people were starting to doubt me by that time, when I said that the passage was there somewhere.

We regrouped in the Main Room, then exited the cave. Outside the cave you almost didn't need a light, even though it was well after dark. It was so foggy that you couldn't see anyway. One of the Rec. Dept. leaders, Warren Slebos, had left the cave a little early because he was cold and wet, one of the Maquoketa victims. Fortunately he was on the trip last fall, or I don't think he would have ever found his way back. I met everyone down at the first flooded ravine and started leading them back to the vehicles. They were sufficiently lost by that time that they stayed in single file behind me with no one straying off. The people that were wet changed out of their clothes and into dry ones, then we began a long and difficult drive home. At times the fog was so thick that the road disappeared completely, and the wind was constantly pouring it by hypnotizingly. Fortunately some stretches were clear, especially when we got past Anamosa, and we eventually made it back.



## MINNESOTA MYSTERY CAVE TRIP

March 30-31, 1979

Michael Bounk

Neal Davie (Mystery Cave owner), Mike Davie, Ed Smith, Mike Temple, Mike Weed, Michael Bounk

On Friday evening, March 30, Mike Temple and I left Iowa City for Decorah, where we camped overnight. The next day, after eating breakfast at the Harmony House in Harmony, Minnesota, we drove to the Mystery Cave I entrance near Spring Valley, Minnesota. When we arrived at about 8:30 AM, we met Neal Davie, the owner, who said that Ed had arrived earlier and gone into Spring Valley for breakfast. We then headed into town, got some gas for my truck, and were located by Ed, after which we returned to the cave. When we arrived back at Neal's house, we met Mike Weed and Mike Davie, Neal's son. After looking at a map of the cave, to get an idea where we were going, we drove to Mystery II which we entered at about 11:00 AM. There is a cement block building over the entrance and we were able to walk down into the tourists section of the cave before putting on our coveralls and equipment.

We then walked along the tourists route which averages about 10 feet wide and 15 to 20 feet high to the Blue Lake. We then traversed a portion of the Straddle Gallery which leads back towards Mystery I, to a lead which Mike and Neal Davie checked out. It continued although very small. We then headed part of the way back through the Straddle Gallery. This Straddle Gallery is generally walking passage, with a joint slot in the floor. It is necessary to straddle this slot to traverse this passage for any significant passage.

After a short rest, we chimneyed about 15 feet down to a lower level, not shown on the map. This is in part the slot which we had been straddling. This passage varies in width from about 8 inches to 2½ feet. It is up to 20 feet high. At times, it widens out to the upper level. However, most of the part of this passage, which we saw, is separate from the main level.

It is necessary to walk sideways through most of this, and we had to traverse one section of passage at a level several feet above the floor, to avoid a very narrow section.

Ed encountered some difficulty after traversing most of this above the floor section. Therefore he and I waited within voice range while the others checked some leads. When they had finished, they returned to us, saw our difficulty, and showed us where to climb down.

We then continued at floor level through more narrow passage, to a side passage, a sideways crawl, which Neal and Mike Weed were able to push, to walking passage.

After they had exited the above passage, Mike Weed, Mike Temple, Ed, and I headed towards Boofer Pool to chimney up to the main level, while Neal and Mike Davie headed out the way we had come in.

I was going first through a sideways crawl, up a slope, then horizontal, when I reached a slope which dropped about 15 feet at about a 45° angle. At the bottom, was a short level area, and then a dark area. I could not tell if this dark area was water or possibly a drop. I was under the impression that although it was known where this passage went, it had never been fully pushed. Therefore, I decided it would be better not to go headfirst down a presumably unchecked slope, since I didn't know if I could turn upright in it. I then backed out, planning to attempt it feet first, however, Mike Temple wanted someone else to try it. Therefore, Ed tried it head first. He thought

that it might be too tight, until Neal arrived from the other side and showed Ed how to get down. The slope turned out to be quite simple and safe. We then chimneyed up to the main level at Boofer Pool. We then returned to the tourist route.

After Neal showed Ed, Mike Temple, and I the Garden of the Gods, and we had taken some more pictures, we exited the cave at about 4:00 PM. After Neal showed us where we had been, on the map, we left. Mike Temple and I arrived back in Iowa City at about 11:00 PM Saturday evening.

We had a very enjoyable and educational trip into a cave unlike any major Iowa cave, thanks to the hospitality of Neal Davie and Mike Weed, and the assistance of Ed Zawlocki.

#### ENGELKEN CAVE

April 29, 1979

Barb am Ende

Debbie Beyer, Mike Bounk, Greg McCarty, Barb am Ende

Debbie, Greg, and I left Iowa City Sunday morning to meet Mike in Anamosa. On the way, Greg's car broke down in Solon and we called Anamosa to have Mike come get us when he arrived. Eventually Greg got his car running and we met Mike just outside of Mount Vernon. In Anamosa we all piled into Greg's car and headed off for up north.

The purpose of this trip was for me to do field work for a term paper I was writing. We had originally planned to go to Gudenkauf Cave and map it, however the owner was not home and when we called him he would not let us in the cave when he wasn't there. So, Greg decided the next best (even better) cave was Engelken. Since this cave was already mapped it left less work for me to do on my term paper.

When we pulled into the farmer's driveway, Greg's muffler fell off, no big loss. Then we talked to the owner and went in the cave. We toured the cave and I noted the speleothems and fossils. When I was taking pictures, my brand new tripod broke. Fortunately it was under warranty and I will get a new one.

We drove back to Anamosa and had a delicious chicken dinner fixed by Greg's mother.



