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John Johnson

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# I N T E R G O M

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## THE IOWA GROTO

*National Speleological Society*



Volume XV Issue 5

September - October 1979



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

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*INTERCOM* STAFF

Editor: Joh Johnson  
Printer: University of Iowa  
Typist: Jane Ries  
Lithophotography: J. Ceronie

COVER PICTURE: Vice-Chairman Barb amEnde and Chairman Mike Bounk holding the Iowa Grotto 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake

Photo by John Johnson





IOWA GROTTO  
National Speleological Society  
P.O. Box 228  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Chairman - - - - - Michael Bounk  
Vice-Chairman - - - Barb am Ende  
Sec'y-Treas. - - - - - Tom Hruska

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## GROTTO MINUTES AT A GLANCE

Thomas Hruska, Secretary

## Regular Meeting September 12, 1979

Room 3407      Called to order: 7:55 PM      Adjourned: 8:35 PM  
 Attendance: 11 members and 3 guests      Treasury: \$135.84  
 The final arrangements for the picnic were discussed. People will be needed to guide trips to caves, and an approximate head count was made. Climbing sessions, mapping practice, and caving are planned for the weekend. Mike has sent mailings to members, former members, and area grottos. A survey of NSS Grottos, sent by the Huntsville Grotto, was discussed. Its main thrust concerned the moral activities of some members at NSS Conventions. No trip reports were given.

## Regular Meeting September 26, 1979

Room 3407      Called to order: 7:45 PM      Adjourned: 8:30 PM  
 Attendance: 11 members and 3 guests      Treasury: \$63.24  
Intercom issues are beginning to appear. Three issues were available at the Grotto picnic without covers. Covers will be printed for these issues and some other issues in the near future. Tom Hruska will be working on back issues while he is in Des Moines. Greg McCarty gave a report on the activities at the Iowa Grotto picnic at Dutton's Cave Park near West Union. This was a celebration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the founding of the Iowa Grotto. Mike Bounk announced that the American Red Cross First Aid course will begin on October 8, 1979. Mike Bounk reported on the Hodag Hunt September 14-16, and Mike Tempel reported on the September Coldwater trip. Several future trips were announced. Ed Smith is planning a trip to Jones and Jackson Counties. The next Coldwater trip will be October 20, and Mike Bounk has a trip to Palisades Kepler State Park for vertical training.

## Regular Meeting October 10, 1979

Room 3403      Called to order: 8:15 PM      Adjourned: 8:50 PM  
 Attendance: 8 members and no guests      Treasury: \$84.49  
 The Red Cross First Aid course has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled some time in January 1980. Greg McCarty has been working to obtain University funding for the Grotto. He will attempt to get a hearing from the Student Senate on funding. A discussion of a dues increase was held. Greg proposes an increase to \$6.00 per year. Barb am Ende is checking on the possibility of having Grotto T-shirts printed. No trip reports were given.

## Regular Meeting October 24, 1979

Room 3407      Called to order: 7:45 PM      Adjourned: 8:20 PM  
 Attendance: 8 members and no guests      Treasury: \$100.74  
 Tuesday October 30 will be the hearing date for student organization funding. We should find out at that time what will be available in funding for the Grotto. Mike reports the Red Cross will be offering a Basic First Aid course November 5 & 7 and a CPR course November 17. A letter was read concerning graduate research assistance in caves and karst. The North Country Region meeting will be held in Lombard, Illinois December 15. This meeting is for election of officers. Nominations for office are due November 17, 1979. Gary and Gwenne Engh reported on the Coldwater trip October 20-21. Greg McCarty reported on his trip to Hopkinton. Future trips to Gudenkauf, Coldwater, and Maquoketa Caves were announced.



HODAG HUNT

September 14-16, 1979

Michael Bounk

On Friday, about 7:30 PM, I arrived at the Hodag Hunt, sponsored by the Wisconsin Speleological Society, which was being held at the Flying J. Campground near Gotham, in southwest Wisconsin.

The campground is located in a grove of pines, and is very attractive. After registering, while finding a place to park my truck, I met Dave McKay, and his daughter Juley of the Rock River Speleological Society, who were camped across the lane from me.

After speaking with them for several minutes, I walked back to the registration tent. At the tent was a device to test a person's ability to go through a very short low place. This consisted of an open ended box about 1.5 to 2 feet wide, with a variable height. Inside, there were a pair of wooden ridges about 2" by 2" running the width of the box, one on the ceiling, and one directly below it on the floor. Some knobs were attached to the floor to make things more interesting. I was able on my second attempt to get through it, while it was set at seven inches.

While we were working on the box, Dr. Warren Lewis, Barry Schuman, and Jim Klagen of Rock River Speleological Society arrived.

The next morning, the Rock River cavers and I ate breakfast in Gotham. After breakfast Jeff Friends and John and Lee Mosis, three Windy City Grotto cavers, joined us for a trip to Castlerock Cave located about 20 miles away in Grant County. This cave, which has about 900 feet of passage is a maze. The passage is generally dry crawlway. Abundant brownish formations are present in some places. It reminds me of Hunter's Cave to some extent.

After leaving the cave, we drove to Castle Rock, and climbed to the top. We then returned to camp.

Early that evening, I attended the North County Regional meeting. The main topic of discussion was planning for the 1980 NSS Annual Convention in Minneapolis.

After the meeting we had hash for dinner followed by a talk and saw a slide show by Joe Sanders on caving in Kentucky.

The next day Dr. Lewis, Berry, Jim and I went to Bogis Bluff Cave. This cave, which is located in the Prairie du Chien Dolomite, is several hundred feet long and has three entrances. It is generally crawlway, although some bellycrawl and walking passage are present. The cave was dry when we visited it.

While in the cave we met John Cohn of Windy City Grotto.

After exiting the cave, I and Dr. Lewis, Berry, Jim, John, and several other Windy City cavers visited Cave of the Mounds, near Blue Mounds, Wisconsin.



This cave, which is located in the Galena Formation, is very heavily decorated and very attractive. The guided tour of the cave was very well done.

After the tour, I returned to North Liberty where I arrived about 8:00 PM.

#### COLDWATER TRIP

September 15-16, 1979  
Jerry Bybee, Mike Tempel

Mike Tempel, M.D.

On my return from a chest Radiology conference in Minneapolis I stopped at Coldwater and met Dr. Jerry Bybee and several of his friends. Bruce (the astronomer) was present from the Rock River group. A couple of visitors from the Windy City Grotto were also present that weekend. The remainder of the usual Coldwater group was attending the Hodag hunt in Wisconsin this particular weekend.

Our trip consisted of a downstream caving trip to the Downstream, or Monument Passage, under my direction.

This particular trip, the windmill in the passage opposite the downstream passage, was in operation. The rounds of the windmill turning, with the peculiar clanking of metal against limestone was evident - as it was to the first explorers of Coldwater (Barnett et al).

We explored the downstream portion of the "Monument" passage to its terminus. The passage ends in a mud bank. The stream in this passage, which actually does flow downstream, or away from the main stream in Coldwater, disappears under a low ledge too small to enter. The possibility of a connection between this passage and another unexplored segment of Coldwater seems possible due to the unusual direction of the water flow in this passage, but considerable excavation through the mud bank at the terminus of the passage would be required in order to determine whether or not a new segment of cave does exist in this region.

The trip ended unremarkably, with a leisurely trip back to the shaft and photography along the return route. Bruce, from Rock River, was left in charge of locking the cave, and I departed for home the evening of the 15th because I had spent all of the previous week in Minneapolis at the previously mentioned meeting.

#### OCTOBER COLDWATER TRIP

October 20-21, 1979

Greg Scherf, Walter Wolfe, Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, Solange Dog

Gwenne Engh

The October Coldwater trip was Gary's, Solange's and my first caving trip in Iowa outside of the fall picnic trips. Since we were the first to arrive, Ken Flatland led the way to the compound and unlocked the shed.



We set up our tent and waited for the Rock River folks.

They arrived after I'd gone to sleep. Who came in what order will not be recorded. Gary said we were made beautifully welcome but that they were all taller than us.

Saturday, we went into Harmony for the habitual matutinal meal where it was decided Greg Scherf would lead Walter Wolfe from Milwaukee, Gary and I on a tourist trip.

Around noon, we went upstream past Mike's crinoid fence, past Jumping Off Point on up to Pete's Pipe, then back downstream to the Gallery to just the edge of Pot Hole Country. (Greg, sounding ominous, said people got wounded down there.) He turned us around, but before leaving the cave he took us up the first dome passage to the right going upstream from the shaft. The dome was beautiful, the passage was a mud luge with a slotted floor. After cleaning off some of the mud in the stream, we climbed up to the shed around 4 PM.

Up top, Walter's friend and Florence, a friend of Doc Lewis, had made a pot of food. Everyone sat around the campfire to eat unbothered by crepuscular pests. Later Pete DeVries showed slides of his vacation, after which some retired or adjourned for more fire watching and dog feeding.

#### IOWA GROTTO THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY PICNIC

September 21-23, 1979

Greg McCarty

Compared to the last few years, there were some big plans for the Iowa Grotto annual picnic this year. This was because the grotto was celebrating its thirtieth year since the club was founded. Due to some films that didn't arrive and a less than exceptional turnout, though, it wasn't much different from the picnics of the last few years. Everyone had a good time, though. Mike Bounk and I had contacted everyone that had been associated with the grotto in recent years, as well as some out-of-state friends and people who had belonged to the grotto years ago but were still around somewhere. For a couple people we never did come up with addresses. So make sure you leave an address with the grotto when you move out of the area if you want to be told about such activities. The list was over one hundred names long, but only sixteen showed up.

Mike Bounk, Griss Gilbert, Barb am Ende, Mike Tempel, Lowell Burkhead, Ed Smith, Mike Geraldts, Debbie Novak (Mike's girlfriend), Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, John Johnson, Greg McCarty, and Dr. Warren Lewis and Barry Schuman of Rock River. We also invited two cave owners that have been very kind to us, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Pape and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Thies. The owners of Sowards and Mittelstadt Caves respectively. We invited Ken Flattland, the owner of Coldwater Cave, also, but he couldn't make it.



Mike Bounk, Criss, Barb, and I drove up to the park Friday night, and found Doc Lewis and Barry Schuman already asleep. Most of the rest of the people showed up Saturday morning. When Ed got there we walked through a dense cornfield, a short cut we thought, to have a look at Park Edge Pit. It hasn't changed any. A few of us went into town to get some breakfast before things got going, and by the time we got back some people were starting to show up. I had made plans for climbing sessions, mapping practice, cave trips, and other things to keep people occupied in interesting and useful ways. Two key words there are people (we hardly had any), and interest (we had even less of this). There was interest and people for a trip to Sowards Cave, though, so Mike Bounk took everyone over there. By now Mike should know every inch of that cave by heart. Lowell, Barb, and I stayed behind to watch over things. John showed up while we were having an acorn fight, but he seemed disinclined to join us. John brought a cake that had the Iowa Grotto emblem on it, and the dates 1949 to 1979. It was delicious.

When everyone got back from the cave we started heating up the food, and I made one more trip into town to get milk. The cave owners showed up just as the food was about ready, and everyone sat down to a big meal. Chili (made by Lowell) and chicken and noodles (made by my mom) were the main course, and potato salad (made by Mike Tempel) along with other goodies made up the rest. The chili made a big hit with Louis Thies. After the meal was a slide show, and a movie that had been made at the 1974 NSS Convention we hosted in Decorah (fond memories?). John also showed a short film he made at a past grotto picnic. After the show was over some of the people took off for home, and some of the rest left the next morning.

Before Mike Bounk and I hit the sack, after all it was only midnight, we went down into the valley and into the entrance of Duttons Cave. I wanted Mike to show me a dome that had been checked out by a new person on a recent trip. It's not very far into the cave, and near the south wall. I wanted to see for myself, so I had Mike give me a boost up into it. It's an exceedingly difficult climb without help. Once you can reach the top of a slab of breakdown that is hanging down from a slope the climb becomes easy. The steeply sloping passage that continues soon ends, but not before it gets a little narrow. There was a little brown bat hanging on the wall at this narrow spot. When I tried to slide past him I slipped on the greasy slope with my tennis shoes and brushed against him. He got very scared and clung to my sweatshirt, refusing to let go. I checked out the rest of the passage, then climbed back down to where I had room to work on it. I didn't have gloves on, so I didn't want to pull him off by hand. Thinking my light might be scaring him I traversed out over the hole leading down and turned off my flashlight. This had no better luck than vigorous shaking. I finally took the sweatshirt off and held it over the hole. One sharp snap later the bat was on his way. He flew on out the entrance, and probably didn't come back that night (at least). It didn't prove to be as hard to get back down from the dome and onto Mike as I was afraid it would be, so that was a relief.

The next morning we ate some of the leftover food, then Lowell departed with it in his beast. He had gotten it running again for the picnic. Gary, Gwenne, Ed, Mike Bounk, and I stayed in the area for some lead checking. We started off with a large sinkhole I had seen on the



new topo sheet for the area, but it was filled with junk. When we tried to have a look at a bunch of sinkholes Lowell and I had partially checked back in 1972 we found that they had all been bulldozed shut. Our next stop was a hike down a pretty valley to where a spring came out. No sign of any caves though. We finally checked out a side branch valley like the one Sowards Cave is in, and just west of there. We fought our way through fallen trees and brush, and got to the top of a waterfall. Just like at Sowards. Also like Sowards there is a spring coming out of the rubble, but unlike Sowards there is no entrance. Quite likely that there is a cave there, but the entrance is buried in the rubble. We checked out the sides of the gorge, but no caves were to be found. Up on top again we wandered around in some woods and found some sinkholes, but all had too much dirt going into them. We got caught in a brisk rain shower while back at this gorge.

Having run out of good leads, it was decided to go to Wet Cave. I was the only one who had seen the cave before. We stopped at the owners, then proceeded to Falling Spring. Then we drove down the road a little farther and hiked up the valley to Wet Cave. When one of us walked into the dry part of the cave a mouse was stepped on. I don't think it did him any good. We quickly toured the cave up to the breakdown, then I led the way through this loose pile back to the final room. Gary made it through okay, and Gwenne made it through all of the hard part. She became nervous after Ed turned around and backed out, though, and decided to rejoin Mike and Ed. To save time I told Mike to stay behind, then, and just went ahead with Gary to the last room. The breakdown crawl isn't really safe, but it can be done if you are very careful. Everytime I'm in there I swear that it'll be the last time, but I suppose eventually I'll try it again. The breakdown room is much larger than the rest of the cave, and features slabs of rock peeling off the ceiling. After Gary and I had rejoined the others we exited the cave. An apple tree in the pasture pleased some of the group, but I much preferred the one that was on a farm from earlier in the day. We split up then and made our respective ways back home. Mike and I stopped off in Anamosa on the way back to Iowa City, and finished off the chicken and noodles so they wouldn't go to waste. Hopefully next years picnic will be a little better, but I think the people who went had a good time.

#### UNIVERSITY RECREATION DEPARTMENT TRIP

September 30, 1979

Greg McCarty

Mike Bounk and Greg McCarty

The Recreation Department trip I led last spring for the University was a good success, so they wanted a fall trip also. We made the arrangements, and I gave a slide show and talk to the people that signed up for the trip. I briefly (although some people didn't think it was brief enough) explained how caves are formed and why they are important to the environment. I explained safety



concerns, and the need for conservation. While showing the slides, borrowed from Mike, I explained the techniques used in caving.

Mike helped me lead the actual trip. Counting us and the Rec. dept. representative, there were fourteen. Since highway 64 is closed east of Anamosa, I took the group up a series of county pavements toward Maquoketa. Once in the vicinity, I tried to find the back way into the park on the gravel roads. I didn't have a map, and had only been that way once before about six years ago. Consequently, we went down the wrong fork of a Y intersection, and ended up west of the park and had to come back on the county pavement.

Once we finally got to the park, I explained what the history of the caves were, and how they presumably were formed, then we entered the upstream entrance of Dancehall. I directed many of the people into the Bat passage, telling them that we would meet them around the corner. They were appropriately shocked to find out that the other end of the passage comes out ten feet off the floor, and is unclimbable. They were directed to jump down, where I would catch them with some help from Mike. One girl, though, didn't work her way down a bit first, and carelessly jumped into my face with her boots. Unhappy with this I never set her down, but instead carried her over to the stream. I hung her upside down over it and threatened to drop her in if she didn't settle down and listen to instructions. After everyone had descended, we went through all of the loop passages in the area of the Balcony. Here we were able to get in a little practice climbing as well. The Steelgate passage was next, and we made the loop back down the dome. A couple people weren't out of sight yet, so I chimneyed down without a light so that I wouldn't be seen. I had told the people immediately behind me what was going on so that they would keep quiet, but most of the other people didn't know what was going on when they got to the bottom. At least one was worried about finding the way out when I sent him down the passage, but since it is a single passage (which they had just come through minutes before) I assured them that they would probably make it.

Mike and I were the last ones out to the center entrance, where everyone had gathered, so we knew we had everyone. We proceeded out the downstream entrance and over to Tourist's Delight to watch the water flow out. After a quick tour of Rainy Day Cave, we climbed back up out of the valley and over the hill to Wye Cave. I was sure that the low spot would be full of water, which it was, so everyone just went as far as that pool so they could see what the first part of the cave is like. After this we took advantage of the picnic tables in the park and ate lunch, provided by the Rec. Dept.

When we arrived at Hunters Cave, our final stop of the trip, we found the cave already occupied by three locals. They set off a couple fire-crackers in the Main Room, and some bottle rockets outside the entrance. An unfortunate occurrence when trying to set a good conservation example for novices. After everyone had wandered around in the Main Room for a while to get adjusted to the darkness and slippery mud, we proceeded to the Pit Room. Next we all went over Rupture Rock and through the Canyon Room to the Skull Room. The Canyon Room was completely dry. Once back



in the Pit Room, it was decided that we didn't have a lot of time left. I wanted to take them on one more long route, so I opted for the Maze rather than the Paradise Room. Also this group wasn't as good a group as the one last spring, so I thought it would be a good idea to run them through some small passage and get them muddy. We went back through the Main Room and into the Flatroom series. The hole that leads into the Maze was full of water, just right for a sadistic trip leader like myself. I showed everyone where we had to go, then laid on my belly and plunged through after enjoying the chorus of groans. By the time everyone had squeezed through the portal in front of the second pool, and completed the long crawlway leading up to the small rooms just off the Pit room, they were less than enthusiastic. They couldn't believe we do that sort of thing for fun, yet no experienced caver would think twice about such a passage. We regrouped in the Main Room, and counted everyone on the way out.

I was the last one out of the cave, and found that everyone else was already heading back to the van. They all, including Mike, were going the wrong way however. When I got to the little creek I yelled down the valley to them, then took off my coveralls and sat down to wait at the van. When everyone else caught up they insisted on several pictures of the muddy group, then we headed back to Iowa City. We detoured all the way down to Davenport, though, to find a Standard gas station that was open so the credit card could be used. An adequate trip, but certainly not a great one.

#### VERTICAL TRAINING TRIP

October 27, 1979

Michael Bounk

Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, Criss Gilbert, Michael Bounk

At 7:30 AM, I met Gary and Gwenne in North Liberty, and we drove in their car to Palisades Kepler Park.

When we arrived, I rigged a 15 foot drop with a length of Bluewater III rope, while discussing the method of rigging with Gary and Gwenne.

After I demonstrated the method of rappelling, using a safety rack and ascending, using jumars, Gary and Gwenne each practiced descending and ascending the drop several times.

They also rappelled the drop using carabiners and breaker bars, and Gary ascended the drop using prusick knots.

During this time, Criss showed up. Since he has some rappelling experience, he practiced changing over from rappelling to ascending while on the rope.

During this practice, everyone practiced belaying by the method of pulling on the standing rope.



Finally, we rigged a 70 foot drop. Gary, Gwenne, and Criss each descended the rope, then climbed it on jumars. I practiced descending the drop on carabiners and breaker bars, and ascending it on prusick knots. By the time everyone had descended and ascended the drop one time, it was fairly late in the afternoon, so we ended the practice.

#### LEAD CHECKING AROUND HOPKINTON

October 27, 1979

Greg McCarty

Deb Berg and Greg McCarty

This was Deb's first cave trip, so I thought it would be appropriate if we did some wild goose type lead checking as well as visiting a known cave. We started out by going north of Hopkinton to have a look at some sinkholes I had seen on a topo map. The owner was just coming in from the fields when we got there, so we fought our way through his overly friendly dogs to ask about them. He only knew of one sinkhole in some woods back through the fields, so we drove on out to have a look at it. The field was very sandy, and you had to be careful not to get stuck. Especially when you turned around. Overheating was also a possibility as fast as my car leaks water. We checked a couple likely looking places along the way, but found only large quantities of sand burrs. No fun having to remove a few dozen of these little devils. When we got back to the sink we saw that the owner was right in assessing it as a dud. It had a nice round bottom. Evidence of trees being bulldozed over may explain where the other two depressions went to that I had seen on the map.

Our next stop was a county park along the river by Hopkinton, Hardscrabble Park. Back in 1973 an area farmer had told me there was supposed to be a cave somewhere in the park, but I had never gone to the park to look for it. Before we got to the park we located an opening in the bluff above the road. It should be enterable with some digging. I managed to squeeze in a little ways, and it didn't look very promising at all. We drove all the way through the park, stopping any time we thought we saw something from the road. Nothing panned out, though, and we were soon tired of climbing up the steep hill and bluff faces to check a dark spot near the top. Nothing we checked in the park even resembled a cave.

It was starting to get late, so we gave up on this and drove over to Hunts Cave. No one was home so we left a note on the door and walked back to the cave. It had been a little while since I had last been to the cave, and the valley seemed different. But I think that happened to me the second time I saw the cave also, this being my third trip. Deb pushed all of the passages to the end, for the experience, and had no trouble getting into the little pocket room at the end of the Canyon Passage. We spent some time pulling mud names off the walls, and I took a number of pictures.

It was dark by the time we got out of the cave, but it is easy to find the way back to the farmhouse. The owner still wasn't home, so I just took the note back off the door. We searched the farm yard in vain for a water spigot to refill my car, but were unable to find it. There almost certainly is one somewhere. The water we had on hand was enough to get us back to Anamosa, though, so we didn't have to stop somewhere else.