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Greg McCarty

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THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society

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IOWA GROTTO *INTERCOM*
P. O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52244

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COVER PICTURE: Ed Smith crawling through Wet Cave

Photo by Mike Bounk

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

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GROTTO MINUTES AT A GLANCE

Thomas Hruska, Secretary

Regular Meeting May 14, 1980

Room 125 Called to order: 7:35 PM Adjourned: 8:15 PM
Attendance: 8 members and 2 guests Treasury: \$213.04
Greg McCarty reported on Student Senate funds for the grotto. \$258.00 was allocated for the next school year. Progress on editing, typing, and printing of the Intercom was reported by Greg McCarty. Jim Huber, Criss Gilbert, and Greg McCarty donated publications to the grotto library. Mike Bounk gave a trip report on his trip to Coldwater Cave. Greg McCarty told about a trip to dig a sink at Scotch Grove. Lowell Burkhead reported on a trip to Jackson County. Future trips were mentioned

Regular Meeting May 28, 1980

Room 125 Called to order: 7:30 PM Adjourned: 8:10 PM
Attendance: 8 members and no guests Treasury: \$212.04
The 1980 NSS Convention at Minneapolis, Minnesota, was discussed. Some grotto members are making plans to attend. Activities at the May Coldwater trip were presented by Mike Bounk, Gary and Gwenne Engh, and Jim Huber. Mike reported on his trip to Fayette County. Several future trips are planned. Don't forget to plan for the NSS Convention July 26 - August 3.

Regular Meeting June 11, 1980

Room 125 Called to order: 7:40 PM Adjourned: 8:50 PM
Attendance: 8 members and 4 guests Treasury: \$216.04
The results of the spring grotto picnic at Pictured Rock Park were briefly discussed. A lengthy discussion on cave rescue was conducted. The grotto has not stressed its rescue preparedness in almost ten years. It was reported the grotto may be contacted for some consulting work at Coldwater Cave. Activities at the 1980 NSS Convention were discussed. If the 1974 Convention Guidebook is going to be sold at this year's convention, the Iowa Grotto decided to include an insert concerning landowner courtesy. Greg McCarty reported on his visit to Engelken, White Pine Hollow, Sand Cave, and others. Several future trips were announced.

Regular Meeting June 25, 1980

Room 125 Called to order: 7:30 PM Adjourned: 8:30 PM
Attendance: 11 members and 3 guests Treasury: \$223.54
A big push must be made to produce several Intercoms before the end of June. Procedures regarding publicity involving new caves was discussed. Several trip reports were given. Greg McCarty reported on his trip to the West Union area. Gary and Gwenne Engh are writing a report on their trip to Mammoth-Flint Ridge for the Intercom. Mike Bounk told about the activities at the Coldwater Cave annual party. Gary and Gwenne also reported on a trip to Decorah Ice Cave and Mudslide Pit. Future trips announced would all deal with the upcoming convention.

MAY COLDWATER CAVE TRIP

May 16, 17, 18, 1980

Michael Bounk

Pete DeVries (expedition leader), Stewart Anderson, Jerry Bybee, Julie Bybee, William Collett, Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, Ken Ferrar, Kim Ferrar, Criss Gilbert, Jim Huber, Jim Klager, Dr. Warren Lewis, John Mooney, Dave Neff, Greg Nepstad, Berry Schuman, Greg Sherf, Gary Taylor, Kelly Van Pelt, George Zachariasen, and Michael Bounk

Jim Huber, Criss and I arrived at the Coldwater Cave shed at about 11:15 P.M., where we met Gary and Gwenne Engh, who had arrived earlier that evening. Jerry, Julie, Ken and Kim who had arrived at about 7:00 P.M. from the Davenport area were asleep in the shed.

Everyone else, except Stewart, William, and Gary Taylor who arrived at about 9:00 A.M. Saturday, arrived later that evening, or very early the next morning.

Later in the morning, Criss, Jim Huber, Stewart, William and Gary Taylor entered the cave in an unsuccessful attempt to collect samples of stream deposits, which Criss had planned to analyze for pollen and vertebrate remains. When they reached the Waterfall Passage, Stewart, William and Gary continued upstream to the Waterfall, as is discussed in Criss' report. They all exited the cave in late afternoon.

A second trip was lead by George who at about noon headed upstream with John, Jerry, Ken, Kim, Dave, Greg Nepstad and Kelly on a photography trip. After reaching the vicinity of the Jumping Off Point, they headed downstream to Pothole Country, finally exiting the cave at about 3:30 P.M.

Berry helped me attach a length of steel tape to a leg of the platform, in order to measure the stream level in feet and tenths rather than feet and inches, in order to more easily compare readings there with those on the automatic stream level recorder. When we had finished, he, Jim Klager, Gary, and Gwenne Engh went on a surveying trip as is discussed in their report.

Other than the above short trip into the cave, and one to measure the colume of the stream flow, I stayed on the surface, where I helped clean up the compound, and helped Greg Sherf build a geodetic dome to be used as an extra shelter.

The next morning after breakfast in Harmony, we headed home.

MAY COLDWATER TRIP

May 17, 18, 1980

Criss Gilbert

Jim Huber, Stewart Anderson, and two friends and Criss Gilbert

Our jaded, worldly, sophisticated, experienced crew headed upstream to look for vertebrate fossils. Our destination was the waterfall passage. Jim and I dug matrix for screening while Stewart and friends went up the waterfall

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passage to look for source areas where bone might be entering the cave system. Both endeavors were fruitless. Jim and I did find a plethora of vertebrate material in the bed of the stream that occupies the waterfall passage. Most of it has been identified (by Dr. Holmes Semken and myself) as small vertebrate remains of species still extant in the area today. Stewart's group reached the waterfall dome and observed the speleotrash that can be found there. It would be a good idea in the future to rid the cave of such superfluous material. A race was established on the way back, with myself in the lead for most of the way, only to be passed in the last few meters from the shaft by Stewart's friends. Jim and I went down stream for a short distance before ascending to the surface. A beautiful, meaningful experience was had by all.

MAY COLDWATER TRIP

May 17, 1980

Gwenne Engh

Barry Schuman, Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, and Solange Dog Alias "Spike"

Plans had been made well in advance for Jim Klager, Barry, Gary and I to go up cascade to survey, but the weather turned vile and it was decided the risk of flood was too great.

As we were all occupied dressing to go in the cave, "Spike" had a dramatic but lucky run-in with a car. After we returned from a vet in Harmony with a healthy dog, most people were already down the shaft. Klager had rushed over to Ken Flatland's to notify the vet we were on the way and had not returned. Barry, we were told, was digging by himself in the south snake, so we went down to join him.

We found him coming back toward the shaft and he turned us around to show us south snake. A lot of water comes out of there but no one has thoroughly checked it out. We went in the passage in the wrong order, Barry leading. To get me ahead of Barry to check a tight place, we had to back out all the way to the main passage.

That discouraged that project. Rationalizing it too would flood quickly we went downstream to survey something. At Sandwich Rocks, Barry lead us up a high bank to a dry crawl paralleling the main stream with Barry in the lead, we crawled to a point where it filled with a minimum of digging, it popped back out to the main passage. After finding a chip in the main stream, we surveyed the loop. The cut around was 130 feet long.

Next we were taken up the passage at Orange and Black Dome. It's a tricky climb up so Barry hauled and Gary pushed and I was up. The passage was a surprise. It's higher than cascade and looks very inviting. We ran down it easily 'til we came to a tee. The left hand passage has been surveyed, the right hand has not. It is up about 3 feet from the tee's floor with small slabs of breakdown in a tight, wet tube.

I didn't want to go down it unless we surveyed it and it was too late in the day for a nasty one. We had all been psyched up to go on an "important" survey up cascade and this was definitely not in the same league, so we headed for the shaft, exiting around 7:30 p.m., feeling kinda down.

Up top, we were ribbed about our gigantic 130 feet of survey, but as no one else had done any at all, we were able to cat call back.

FAYETTE COUNTY CAVE TRIP

May 24, 25, 1980

Michael Bounk

Dave Schwendinger, Tammy Schwendinger, Ed Smith, Michael Bounk

On Sunday, I met Ed in Backbone State Park at 7:15 A.M. After breakfast in Strawberry Point, we drove into Fayette County, where Ed helped me measure rock joint orientations for my study of Silurian karst.

Late in the afternoon, a landowner near Wadena told us of a pit on his land. Ed entered the pit and found that it was a mechanically formed fissure cave, with about 100 feet of passage at the base of a 20 to 25 foot deep pit.

That evening we ate supper in West Union, after which we camped at Duttons Cave Park.

The next day, after measuring a set of joints above Duttons Cave, we met Dave and Tammy at Humphry's Cafe in West Union. We then drove to the Falling Spring area. After leaving a note on the landowners door, we walked down to the spring, where Tammy and I took some pictures of Ed and Dave climbing around the entrance. We then drove and walked back to Wet Cave, which Ed, Dave and I mapped, except for the breakdown passage at the back of the cave. This last segment is extremely unstable, and should not be entered without a specific reason. The total mapped length for Wet Cave so far is a little over 400 feet.

We then checked on a nearby pit which Greg McCarty had shown to Ed and I. With a little digging, we were able to remove an iron wheel blocking the entrance, and Ed and I rappelled in. Ed found about 70 feet of about 1.5 to 2.5 foot high passage going downstream. At the point where Ed turned around the passage continued about 1.5 feet high. I went about 110 feet downstream, quickly reaching 5 to 6 foot high passage, which then became stoopwalk. Finally, the ceiling dropped suddenly to within about 6 inches of the water, which is probably about 6 to 12 inches deep. The passage definitely continues. However it will have to be approached with caution due to the rapid flow into it during dry conditions, and the fact that upstream from it the floor drops rapidly. When we were both back on the surface, we discussed our finds and decided that wetsuits would be needed to push it.

By then it was about 5:00 P.M., so Dave and Tammy headed home as did Ed and I after speaking to the landowner.

ENGELKEN CAVE AND OTHER POINTS NORTH

May 28, 29, 1980

Deb Berg

Greg McCarty, Deb Berg

For several months now, Greg and I had been planning a trip up to northeastern Iowa. Since I'm an out-of-stater, Greg wanted to prove to me that Iowa is not all flat fields and farmland. We had originally planned to spend

three days up north, but we decided to cut it short when the monsoon season moved in on us.

We got one of our usual early starts on Wednesday, pulling out of Anamosa around 1:00 p.m. Up until now, I had only seen caves with relatively non-descript formations so Greg decided I should see Engelken Cave. By the time we reached the Engelken farm, it was getting pretty hot, so it was a relief to climb down the shaft and into the cave. When we hit bottom, we started by checking out the small room off to the right. Greg noted that the cave seemed to be quite dry. As we were about ready to return to the main passage, I noticed an object located toward the back of the room. On closer examination, we determined that it was the bloated carcass of either an extremely large raccoon or a dog. Leaving our furry friend behind, Greg and I returned to the main passage.

Traveling through the rest of the cave, we noticed a lot of blackened survey markings along the passage walls. Greg eventually hopes to return some day and remove them.

About a third of the way from the end of the cave, we worked our way through the tight squeeze off to the right of the main passage. Going feet first, it took Greg just a short time before he popped loose and slid through the slot. It took me a little longer. I got hung up on a rock point and nearly removed something near and dear to my heart. Actually, it's a few inches to the right...sure would have been a shame to break up a matched set like that.... With Greg pulling on the cuffs of my coveralls, I finally managed to slip through. We continued on to the final stretch of passage filled with soda straws and all sorts of other goodies. It's not Carlsbad, but for Iowa, it's pretty good. We soon returned to the surface and resumed our trek to the north.

We next stopped at White Pine Hollow and drove down to the end of the road. For some unknown reason, there was a "Road Closed" sign up but there didn't seem to be anything wrong with the road. We walked into the woods a ways until we reached the top of the hollow. We couldn't see the bottom due to the dense foliage. We returned to the car and headed on up to Guttenburg. There we took time out to look out over the Mississippi near the locks. Next we traveled up to Garnavillo. We had learned that Buck Creek County Park was just northeast of the town and had planned to camp there. Unfortunately, all we found were commercial campgrounds--we never did find the park. As we continued still further north, the rains began. By this time, it was starting to get dark and so we were anxious to find some place to camp. Greg decided we'd try Bloody Run Park west of Marquette. Around 10:30, the rain started to let up so we decided to go ahead and set up the tent rather than spending a hot, stuffy night in my Datsun. Naturally, as soon as we got the tent up, it began to rain again. Later in the night, we rudely discovered that we had set up camp within 100 yards of a railroad track. Early in the morning, it began to thunder and storm tremendously. We consequently didn't crawl out of the tent until it stopped, which was around noon. Once we finally broke camp we went back through McGregor and visited Pike's Peak State Park. Slipping and sliding our way along the greasy trails, we eventually located Bridal Veil Falls and Sand Cave. The iron coloring in the cave was terrific.

Finally, we turned our sights toward Decorah. For months I've been hearing about this place and now I was finally going to get to see it! On our way, we stopped to see the entrance to Glenwood Cave. There was absolutely no water coming from the cave, and the water level inside was low.

We made our next stop at Siewer's Spring where the water displayed its usual cloudy quality (according to Greg). We then breezed through Palisades Park and eventually wound up at Decorah Ice Cave. There was a low quantity of ice due to the dry spring. By this time it was the middle of the afternoon so the natural air conditioning felt great. We briefly stopped off at Dunning Spring on our way to Wonder Cave where we stopped to talk to the owner, Mr. Matter. After visiting for awhile, he offered to unlock the cave so we could tour it on our own. He refused to be paid, instead he asked us to just send some customers up his way (It's only open on the weekends now). Greg and I toured the cave thoroughly (hard to believe that's located here in Iowa...), then headed on the last leg of our journey to Coldwater Spring. So I finally got to see the spring entrance of THE Iowa cave. Someday, maybe, I'll make it inside. Sigh.... Anyway, we packed back into the Datsun and headed southward, followed by a great lightening show to the north. Turns out we were lucky we decided to cut the trip short. It got wet up north. We heard reports of 10 inches near Lime Springs and over 9 inches in Mason City, accompanied by flash flood warnings. Greg and I have not exactly had the best of luck with the weather. If you ever want a dry picnic, don't invite us.

IOWA GROTTO SPRING PICNIC

May 31, June 1, 1980

Michael Bounk

Deb Berg, Lowell Burkhead, Mary Cote', Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, Roger Heidt, Tom Hruska, John Johnson, Jim Klager, Manuel Lara, Greg McCarty, Berry Schuman, Dave Schwendinger, Loren Schutt, Mark Schutt, Mary Schutt, Timothy Schutt, Greg Sherf, Al Smart, Chris Thompson, Carol (from Rock River) and Michael Bounk

Friday night, Gary, Gwenne and I arrived at Picture Rocks Park near Monticello, in Jones County. After setting up our tents, we sat and talked, either at the picnic table or in the back of my truck, depending on the weather.

The next morning after breakfast in Monticello, Gary and I rigged the about 60 foot drop, which we usually use at the park with the Grotto's 200 foot bluewater II. While we were practicing ascending and rappelling, Lowell, Manuel, Roger and Chris arrived, in The Beast. We then rigged an about 20 foot drop and Lowell and I continued the training with all four.

Late that morning, Greg and Deb arrived. After talking for a few minutes, Greg set up a belayed climb, and Loren, Gary, and some of Lowell's friends did some rock climbing. Lowell, I, and the others moved to the longer drop for more practice.

Later, that afternoon, Greg, Jim, Berry, and Carol of the Rock River Speleological Society arrived from Illinois. After visiting with them for awhile, and showing them the entrance of Indian Bluff Cave, I did some rock climbing on belay, with Greg's group, while they did some rappelling.

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At about 6:30 P.M., we had a dinner of hamburgers and hot dogs cooked by John and Tom.

After supper, John and I showed pictures of Iowa caves. After the slide show there was a meeting of the Grotto Safety and Rescue Committee chaired by Dave. After the meeting, those people camping out visited around the campfire until about midnight.

The next day, Gary, Gwenne, Greg, Jim Berry, Carol, Mary, Al, and I went on a tourist trip in Indian Bluff Cave. After we had exited the cave, Gary, Gwenne, Greg, Jim, Berry and Carol went into town for breakfast, after which Gary and Gwenne lead them on a tourist trip into Searryl's Cave, as they discuss in their trip report.

At about this time, Dave and Lowell arrived. The three of us then re-rigged the long drop which we had used the day before and began teaching Mary and Al single rope techniques (ascending and rappelling) while explaining our work to a reporter from the Monticello newspaper.

At about 1:00 P.M., we derigged the drop, and headed home.

SEARRYLS CAVE - JONES COUNTY

June 1, 1980

Gwenne Engh

Gary Engh, Barry Schuman, Jim Klager, Carol, Greg Sherf, Gwenne Engh

After a short pre-breakfast tour of Indian Bluff, we abandoned Mike Bounk et. al. to deal with the press and headed for town to eat.

We visited with the landowner and parked our cars along the road. Before, we could drive closer to the cave by using a field access, but this spring the owner is experimenting with zero-till and has planted hedgerow to hedgerow. Picking our way through just emerging corn, we headed for the cave.

Everyone was impressed by the size of the 1st room and passage and by the amount of dirt fill that has mounded up to the entrance. We lead them up the mud bank to the top of the mound to see some soda straws along the periphery. We all poked around the edges a bit and then went on down the mucky passage to the 1st dome. The room is a symetrical hemisphere with travertine and small drapery evenly covering the walls from top to bottom. The colors vary from white to russet to dark brown.

It once must have been a spectacular cave. Because this had been our 3rd trip to this cave in 7 months, we were over the initial awe of the domes and began to notice the extent of damage to stalactites and once large stalagmites. Everything large within reach has been broken off. Each time we've gone, new trash has appeared.

The passage between the 2 domes has also changed. In several places, the thick mud lining the walls has neatly broken away from the walls in large slabs to collapse into the passage. There was no sign of higher water washing through during the spring, nor for that matter the last 60 years as graffiti in the mud can attest.

The second dome is similar. It too has accumulated new trash. The pools Ed Smith had shown us last fall forming on the floor were now trampled over or muddied.

The biggest difference was the lack of bats. Oh, there were a few, but the colonies in the 2 domes must summer over somewhere else.

On the way out, Barry and then me, dropped into a slot in the mud next to the wall of the 1st dome. It looked like a great place to dig. I checked out a ledge slot at floor level, also an easy dig; figure it might connect with the top of the mud bank off the entry room.

We headed for the cars and home.

Anyone wishing to see this cave should speak to the landowner, Gary Kelchen as to where to park. Also, please take along a garbage bag and fill it with trash.

SPELEOLOGY COURSE AT FLINT - MAMMOTH RIDGE

June, 1980

Gwenne Engh

Gary and Gwenne Engh et. class

There is simply no way to report completely on 8 cave trips in Flint-Mammoth Cave system lead by Roger Brucker so I will briefly outline the course structure and a day by day summary.

From 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., class was held in lecture format. Field trips were 11:15 A.M. - 7:00 P.M. or 8:00 P.M., with a break for dinner, then back at it til midnight. Each trip emphasized what made this system work.

The pace was at a dead run and we were up each morning at 5:45 A.M. cleaning yesterday's gear, bolting breakfast and racing to the showers 6 miles away. (No water on Flint-Tick Ridge.)

Overall, the process of forming caves, not taxonomy or particular theory, was stressed; and skills a caver needs to learn about caves was illustrated. Everything from geology to photography to burn-out to body mechanics was discussed. Politics, landowners and conservation were tied together, all with the main intent of understanding and preserving the wilderness beneath our feet.

Roger Brucker is a passionate, monomaniacal caver who has our respect and affection for the valiant attempt to teach us everything he knows about caves and caving.

DAY 1 - Class dealt with an introduction to speleology, cave forming processes, and what questions to ask yourself in a cave to understand what you are seeing and where to look next.

The field trip began at the spele hut, down Flint Ridge to the Austin entrance. We went into the tunnel, down a short chimney and into the large

trunk passage of Pohl Ave. One walks over huge breakdown blocks and loose rubble. After a short dry crawl we stopped at Keller Shafts where a waterfall comes out of the ceiling to carve out a breakdown block and to drill a pool below. Further down the passage was 3 Spoons domes. Domes occur in clusters in Flint-Mammoth.

Up a 15' steel ladder to Smith Ave. we came to the 80 foot high Brucker breakdown, and Turner Ave. beyond. Turner is a gypsum formation paradise. We came upon "Old Granddad" in the middle of Turner Ave., with its dry formations on one side and wet formations on the other making the huge column a mystery. Past gypsum cotton, flowers, and hair, extreme care in single file was used. Then we went on to Mather Avenue (to avoid the brail Benington Grotto where no one goes now), which looks alot like Coldwater Cave without water or flowstone; we went down Mather to Argo Junction where we turned around.

We saw and learned alot about trunk passages and piracy but there is no space to tell it all.

DAY 2 - Class held brief descriptions of early theory of cave development versus what can be learned through survey and long term study of a particular system, summed up by the 4 needed things that make caves: rain, rocks with cracks, rocks that dissolve, and a place for the water and landscape to go (piano reduction).

The 1st trip was a surface study of karst. We went out onto the sinkhole plain to look at knobs and sinks with the first stop at a sinking creek. Dye tracing showed it next went to the mill hole across the plain near the escarpment, and so did we. 5 streams flow into the mill hole and when it pours, the mill hole boils up with water up to 100 feet deep.

Next we went down Joppa Ridge to the Green River to Turnhole Spring and bushed over to Sandhouse Cave, where eyeless fish trail comes out. Back up Joppa we went to view a caprock outcrop where the difference between sandstone and limestone became apparent. Then back down Flint Ridge where Echo River exits Mammoth Cave.

After supper we all gathered to go into Great Onyx. Down Flint Ridge, Roger spoke of the cave country history, and the people he had interviewed for Trapped.

Great Onyx is heavily decorated near the entrance, and beyond, it extends into a main trunk passage that is dusty, dry and some say dead. We had the run of the place and people scattered to explore the side passages at will.

Our group went to the end of the trunk passage up a bank and into a belly crawl filled with active columns, pools, and soda straws.

Only a small portion of this cave is shown to the public.

DAY 3 - Class time was spent on the role of vertical shafts and water table, retreating canyons and drainage.

Then, back in the Austin Entrance for a trip through Floyd Collins Crystal Cave/Unknown cave's plumbing system.

Vertical shafts in Flint are very complex. As we left Pohl Ave. thru a small hole, we crawled down an underdrain, to a chimney up to another level of switching back passages, up a large hump of gravel which went into a large corkscrew-like maze called Union Shafts. Shafts went up and around us through several layers of ledges and steep drops. It was like a huge piece of slotted swiss cheese connected by short horizontal segments.

At the base of Union shafts we stoopwalked down Eyeless Fish Trail from bank to bank in order to see blind fish and blind crayfish in clear water, on to the Golden Triangle. 400' thru a sump was Sandhouse Cave and the very green Green River. Then we went up the storm sewer, traversing along a high mud bank to the safety of a long tube crawl which led to the overlook, a 130' shaft. Red Watson, who was along for this trip, gave a lecture on shafts and bretz cores. There were several leads off the overlook balcony of canyonlike traverses over deeper canyon levels. By this time Gary and I cannot remember the order or how to get to the places we remember seeing like the place described in Longest Cave where Roger fell in the pool off a landbridge or a terrible (for me) narrow belly crawl traverse on a slick bank near Black Onyx pit. We went back to Pohl Ave. vis the Sandford Shortcut, a long crawl up to Columbian Ave., where Columbian does a 360° turn like a parking ramp. (Wonder what Bretz would have made of that!) Going back up Flint Ridge is alot tougher weighted down by mud.

After supper was a slide show of the connection route of The Longest Cave. Roger is also an expert cave photographer.

DAY 4 - Class was a course in survey techniques, mapping, photography and description (trip reports).

Then off to Colossal Cave to survey after being divided into groups. Our party had been neatly split up and all four were trip leaders of different groups.

About 3/4 of a mile hike down Flint Ridge to the entrance one goes down untrustworthy wooden steps, down a steep slope into an enormous trunk passage with gigantic breakdown in curved, collapsing patterns along the walls and across the passage. We wound down 150' and back up again over breakdown to a room called "The Ruins of Martinique" after Krackatoa. The walls had thinner beds and layers than FCCC or Unknown and more shatter prone layers. Some outcrops looked like card houses of stacked slabs.

We went down the trunk to Colossal Dome. A stone stair wound down 150' through what appeared to be several shafts merged together. We saw old iron pipes at the bottom once used to cross over the top. One can read about that in Longest Cave, but to see what was done is to feel terror.

Up top, Roger had set out survey sections each group was to do. My group, under my command or lack of it, did rottenly. Roger had his hands full with us!

That evening, all the groups mapped their sections 'til quite late. Loop closures were a huge problem. Next morning, the various parts were drafted up together and Brucker's truckers had a map.

DAY 5 - The lecture was on cave archaeology, biology, and conservation (very volcanic lecture on the latter) and history of the area, and Floyd Collins.

The 1st trip was into the sinkhole entrance to Salts Cave which I managed to fall through. Salts is an archaeologist's dream of a laboratory, with cave torches, bowls, human remains of 137 individuals, fecal matter, and woven remnants. The walls and ceiling are black with soot. Newer gypsum and mirabilite are stark white in contrast. Any wood one finds in Salts is 5,000 years old and as light as paper.

The cave is hot - 59° F., so everyone was tee shirt clad and gloveless. In tight places the rock was worn smooth by passing bodies, and cave torch tappings were everywhere. (If you go single file you'd burn your tootsies!)

Once again we were in Huge Trunk Passage and breakdown on the upper levels. The Aboriginies were on all levels. Patty Jo Watson figures they liked to explore too. The cave reeds they dried for light torches still grow along the Green River and one can easily carry a supply under one arm of light for 8-12 hours.

The second trip was lead by Nick Tunks, a class member who is with the N.P.S. as a guide in Mammoth Cave. We found Art and Peggy Palmer surveying off the rotunda and they joined in the fun of a midnite tour of the cave. He took us down to Echo River and into the boats for the first tour since 1965. As the water level was low, we went as far as we could up and downstream with the boats scraping on the ceiling. We saw where Hanson's Lost River comes into Cascade Hall, the "Final Connection" scene.

From there, we went to Mammoth Dome and the Ruins of Karnak, Bretz's "proof" of his core theory. HA! Both Nick and Roger had priceless stories to tell and old guide jokes ran us amuck.

DAY 5 - Roger gave us a rundown on the deep gas hypothesis, getting organized to go exploring, and organization necessary for serious project caving, the problem of burn-out and recruitment.

Field trip - Final exam in Floyd Collins Crystal Cave. We "finally" went in the Crystal Entrance down the Grand Canyon to Floyd where our exam took place. We were told to go off by ourselves to figure out the relationship of the upper part of the passage to the lower part and our reasoning; to describe cave features we could find near the Grand Canyon.

We were given 1½ hours to figure it out. Taking notes and roaring around, one learned to quickly observe and sense where one should go or look next. It was tough to tear one's self away from helectites in huge columns, and Floyd's Crystal Garden and to resist the temptation to run up to Floyd's coffin to ask for help. We then ran up Flint Ridge to write for ½ hour in the shade of Floyd's house.

It was over in a flurry of group pictures and the gift to Roger of a hideous pink "cave rock" as a remembrance of Brucker's Truckers - 1980.

MUGHARA EL WADI CAVE MAPPING TRIP

June 14, 1980

Michael Bounk

I was in Linn County gathering rock joint orientation data for my study of the Silurian strata karst. I stopped at Lowell Burkhead's house in order to obtain some information on outcrop locations, including the one at Mughara El Wadi Cave. He showed me how to get to the cave, and suggested that I map it.

The cave which is located on the edge of a creek is about 70 feet long, and has four entrances. One room runs directly behind these entrances, and two passages off of it lead further back into the bluff. After gathering my joint data from the Anamosa Beds in which the cave occurs, I mapped the cave. NOTE: The map will be published in a future issue of the INTERCOM.

FAYETTE COUNTY GAINS ANOTHER SIZABLE CAVE

June 14, 1980

Greg McCarty

Deb Berg, Greg McCarty

In Mike Bounk's report of May 25th he described the opening of the Wagon Wheel entrance to the Falling Spring system. Deb and I headed on up there so that I could do some pushing, since I would have to miss the next planned trip when the cave is to be mapped. There were some thunderstorms in the area the night before, but I didn't think they would be bad enough to affect the cave much. The owner wasn't home, so we left a note on the door and proceeded to take a look at Falling Spring. The water was up a little and was cloudy, but the spring was still quite pretty. It's one of my favorite springs. The plan was to enter the Wagon Wheel entrance and push upstream. If that didn't work, then I would go downstream and try to connect it with the Falling Spring entrance. The Wagon Wheel entrance is a culvert the county sunk vertically along the road to take water from a valley. They evidently dug out a sinkhole and seated the culvert on the bedrock so the water could go down a crevice into the cave. An iron wagon wheel covers the top of the culvert. We parked the car on the road beside it, and tied the rope off on a leaf spring. After the vertical gear and my lamp were ready to go, I started to change into my wetsuit. By this time the owner had shown up with some friends. We talked for a while, but it was quite hot out and their car soon began to boil over. The one guy wanted to see me get into my "frogman suit", but I stepped behind some bushes. The road wasn't untraveled. They soon left, after kidding Deb about tossing her down the hole if I didn't come out, and I prepared to enter the cave. The hot sun, humidity, and a temperature around ninety combined to nearly kill me off before my wetsuit was completely on. I drank lots of water, and poured some over my head and down my wetsuit. It's no more than twenty feet down to the crevice, which is a little narrow. I tied my vertical gear off on the rope, and quickly headed downstream, laying in the deeper pools, until I came to a ledge where I could drop all of my gear off. I soon was in the walking passage Mike described, and followed it down to where it got low and Mike had stopped. I then went back to where I had left my gear and put my gloves on and packed away the other stuff. I had my hood in case it got low, my cave pack full of goodies and a waterproof flashlight, and I carried a six volt hand lantern for use in low areas if my lamp was put out. I crawled back upstream past the entrance and started the exploration. The passage was comfortable kneecrawl at first,

but then lowered to an easy belly crawl over gravel. I came to a joint controlled room, quite common in this cave, where there was plenty of room to sit up and move around. The passage after this room was considerably lower. The floor was calcified plates and snaggy spots. I squeezed ahead one body length, but couldn't get farther with my helmet on. When I tried to take it off my lamp was put out. I backed on out to the room once again and found, of course, that I couldn't get a spark from my striker. Since there was no dry place to put things I had to put everything in my lap so I could dig into my pack and get out my waterproof matches. They work just fine, but it is very time consuming getting them out in this type of situation. I need to figure out something easier. After everything had been put back I tried the passage one more time. This time carrying my helmet. I made it about one and a half body lengths this time before I was stopped. I could see it getting slightly better just ahead and to the left, but my hood was stuck in my coveralls so my chest was too thick. Also my hips weren't doing real well. Up ahead I could see it continues to a rimstone dam, and it looked worse after that so I don't have a lot of hope it can be pushed. A slim person who wasn't encumbered by gear should be able to make it up to the dam for a look, though.

When I came back downstream, after being able to push less than one hundred fifty feet of passage, I yelled up the culvert to Deb so she'd know I had changed directions. She said the weather still looked okay, so I started downstream hoping to come out the Falling Spring entrance. The short stretch of walking passage just downstream from the entrance is very pleasant. The walls are clean and scalloped, and the stream gurgles along cheerfully over rapids and around blades of rock. Definitely the best part of the whole cave. When I got to the low place where Mike stopped, I put on my hood and continued. It turned out to be unnecessary, though, as the lowest it got down to was five inches of air. Within twenty feet it opened up again to easy crawlway, so I took my hood back off. Just downstream there were a few black stalactites, one of the few examples of speleothems in the cave, in a line across the passage. You have to get low under them to get by. The passage was mostly knee to belly crawl, and about five feet wide. This is not true at the Falling Spring entrance, where it is low and not very wide once you get twenty feet in or so. It splits in two at this point, and the Wagon Wheel section must be part of the right hand branch. Neither branch has been pushed to any extent from the spring. It is low, and no one gave it much hope of enlarging. The passage I was now pushing had few long straight sections. Like most of the cave it winds around quite a bit. As the roar of the water in the walking passage faded away, I kept hoping that I would soon hear the roar of the entrance. I never did. I came to another low section of passage, so I put my hood back on. This was lower than the first low section, having about four inches of air, but was only about twelve feet long. The water was now deeper, and the floor smelly mud instead of sand. It didn't look good at all. Sure enough, I went around a few more corners and the passage sumped completely at a joint controlled room. I forgot to feel around with my feet, but I'm sure the passage continued at a size that would be easily passable. I had extended the length of the cave to six hundred fifty feet or so, quite nice for Iowa.

I made good time on the way out. Both because I wanted to avoid having to change carbide, and because I didn't want to spend all day in a cave that floods to the ceiling on a day like that. It took me one hour to reach the sump and return to the entrance. I had a watch in my pack so that I wouldn't overstay

my allotted in-cave time. It didn't take me long to slip into my vertical gear and jumar out, and once out I rapidly started peeling off my wet suit. The friend of the owner had returned by this time, and was very interested in my description of the cave. Until he figured out that I was talking about crawlway, and then he lost his interest altogether. After all the gear had been stowed away, and the vacilene wiped off me, we drove back to the owners. We talked for quite a while about various things, like the state of the world or the small stroke he had the other day (he's learned to live with the problems it caused). He gave us a couple dozen eggs that his chickens had layed, they're doing so well he can't keep up with them. I told him we'd bring him a copy of the map of Wet Cave that Mike Bounk, Ed Smith, and Dave Schwendinger made in May on the next trip. We then headed off for Duttons Cave, but not before he made some comments about how when he was younger he liked his girls pleasingly plump. This thrilled Deb to no end, but she had to agree that he's a nice guy, just a character.

It looked like it might storm in the south, but things were still good around West Union. We stopped in town to pick up a couple malts to go with our tuna sandwiches, then headed for the park. I stopped along the way to show Deb Park Edge Pit, which was difficult to get to wearing shorts. We parked in the upper campground and changed into our caving clothes. We planned to do the cave the hard way, no wetsuits and no wool. We were going all the way to the first sump, but we weren't going to spend all day in there. As soon as we reached the top of the bluff I figured we were in trouble. It was obvious that water had flowed out of the cave the night before. We dropped our gear in the entrance and checked the route to the main passage. There was about four inches of air above the water. Things might have been okay later on, or they might be too full of water, but without wet suits we weren't going to do something that low. We poked around the entrance for a while, then walked on down to the lower picnic area. We decided not to do any more that evening, but instead try to get home before midnight. We almost made it. We were treated to lots of lightning on the way home, but it never did rain.

JUNE COLDWATER CAVE TRIP

June 20-22, 1980

Michael Bounk

Pete DeVries (expedition leader), Ken Flatland, Wanda Flatland, Gary Engh, Gwenne Engh, Dave Neff, Linda Applegate, Rudy Pruszko, Dwayne Story, Norman Story, Berry Schuman, Jim Klager, Greg Sherf, Brad Olson, Dave DeVries, Frank Rose, Kathy Mason, Jim Elliott, Mary Foyer, Bruce Foyer, Marc Robinson, Gloria Rex, Charles Rex, Vicki Calacurcio, Tom Manson, Jacki Rose, Carol McMeen, Barb Walff, Randy Hluandez, Dave McKay, Ron Bonnstetter, George Zachariasen, Bill Zarwell, Bill Mixon, and Michael Bounk

At 10:00 P.M., Friday evening, I arrived at the Coldwater Cave entrance shed, where I met Gary, Gwenne, Dave Neff, Linda, Dwayne, Norman, and Ron.

The next day, after breakfast in Harmony, Minnesota, Gary, Gwenne and I headed upstream on a trip lead by them in order to study some of the geological relationships of the cave.

After inspecting the bedding near the Jumping Off Point, we continued up the main passage, and Pete's Pipe to the Swisch Passage. We followed this passage to Hoot Dome at it's upstream end. In the dome, we met Jim Klager and Carol McMeen who had been heading upstream a short distance ahead of us.

Jim and I tried to boost Gary up to where he could climb up to an upper level passage about 15 feet above the floor of the dome. However, even with me standing on Jim's hips, and bracing Gary's feet, he was unable to reach a handhold, which would have enabled him to pull himself up into the passage. Next, we studied possible routes up to two other suspected upper level passages in this dome, and decided that the best method will be to use the climbing pole. Jim and Carol then exited the cave, as did Gary, Gwenne and I after a short trip up the Pipe.

While we were in the cave, Berry and Dave Neff, Linda, Rudy and Dwayne went on a tourist trip downstream to the Wellpipe Passage. They then headed up this passage to the Cascade Passage, which they then followed back to the main passage, after which they returned to the shaft and exited the cave.

While we were in the cave, Greg Sherf and some other cavers repaired the geodetic dome, which had been damaged by a storm since the May trip, and covered it with a parachute. In addition, there were a number of other trips into the cave.

That evening, we had a dinner of steak, hot dogs, hamburgers, beans and potato salad, part of which was prepared by Wanda Flatland, and part provided by the Rock River Speleological Society Cavers. After dinner, we saw slides of Coldwater Cave, and Pete's trip to Alaska.

The next morning, Dave Neff, Linda, Rudy, Dwayne, Norman and I left at about 8:20 A.M., for Decorah where we ate breakfast, after which we went caving as is discussed in another report in this issue.

SECTION 4 CAVE MAPPING TRIP

June 22, 1980

Michael Bounk

Dave Neff, Linda Applegate, Rudy Pruszek, Dwayne Story, Norman Story, and Michael Bounk

As is discussed in the proceeding report, we left Coldwater Cave at 8:20 A.M., and headed for Decorah, where we ate breakfast at the Colonial Kitchen. On the way back to our vehicles, we met Gary and Gwenne Engh and Berry Schuman, who were on their way to breakfast. They planned to check out a nearby pit as will be described in their report in this issue.

After leaving them, we headed south to Fayette to wait for some Iowa Grotto members who I hoped would show up but didn't. We then drove to the cave owners house to obtain permission to enter the cave. He was extremely friendly and not only gave us permission, but showed us where the cave is located.

The cave consists of one passage about 60 feet long, which starts as crawl-way, and ends as an impossible bellycrawl. A side passage to the left becomes impossible after about 10 feet.

While Dave was speaking with the owner, I taught everyone else the basics of the brunton and tape method of cave mapping.

After we had finished mapping the cave, we drove to Duttons Cave Park. where Dave and I taught Dwayne and Rudy how to ascend and rappel. I used this opportunity to try Dave's Mitchell setup.

We finished our work, and left at about 4:30 P.M.

BIG EXPEDITION TO DECORAH ICE CAVE AND MUDSLIDE PIT

June 22, 1980

Gwenne Engh

Barry Schuman, Gloria Rex, Chuck Rex, Barb Wolff, K. O. Hernandez, Gary Engh and Gwenne Engh

After breakfast in Decorah we went into the ice cave to see if there was any ice about. There was very little. After gazing at a snail fossil Barry found in a wall, we underwhelmedly left.

After Decorah Ice we traveled east of Decorah to investigate a cave called Mudslide Pit. Receiving permission from the renter of the land, we proceed to the sink.

Entry to the pit is through an oval slot 2 feet by 6 feet, at the bottom of the sink, 40 feet in diameter. (These measurements are estimates.)

One end of the slot, 2-3 feet down, is jammed with several logs. The walls of the opposite end of the slot are close enough together with a series of ledges making it possible to chimney this end.

Barry rigs up and rappels down about 20 feet. He then returned to the surface to help me rig up. As this is my 1st time rappelling underground, I only go as far down as a return chimney would permit.

The point at which I stop is still an estimated 15-20 feet off the floor on which a stream runs perpendicular to the pit. Total depth is estimated to be 60 feet.

Opposite the chimney end of the pit, the walls open out and slope up following the contour of the sink above. The walls forming this rather impressive canyon are rough and wet. Knee pads would have made ascent faster and more comfortable.

Since the sink is on the homing route to Rockford and points last, several people from party week stop while we are there.

Next trip should include a survey.

WET CAVE

FAYETTE COUNTY, IOWA

Dry Section

Brunton and Nylon Tape

Wet Section

Suunto and Nylon Tape

May 27, 1980

by
Michael Bounk
Ed Smith
Dave Schwendinger
IOWA GROTTOS
N.S.S.



