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Greg McCarty

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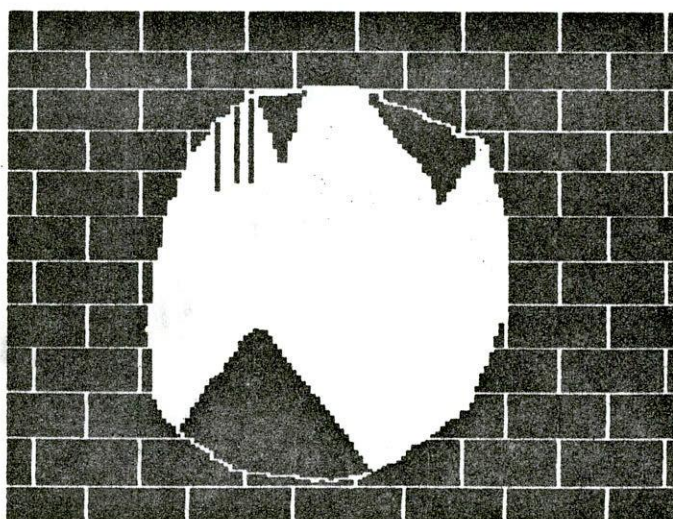
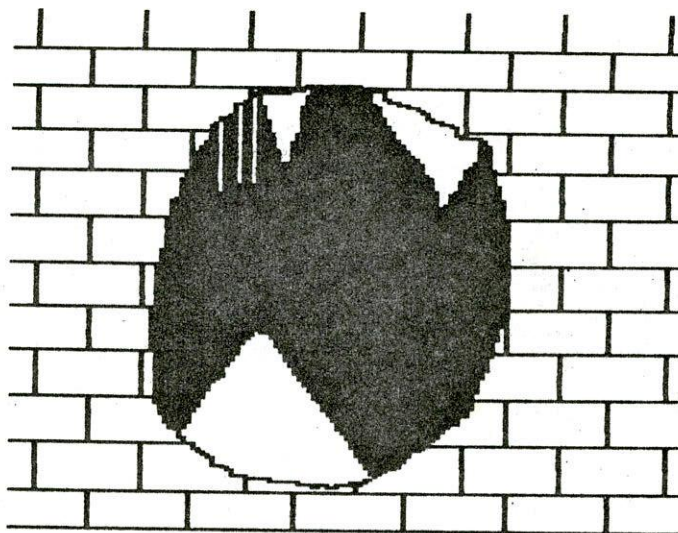
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THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society

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Volume XX Issue 1

January — February 1984



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IOWA GROTTTO
National Speleological Society
P.O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa - 52244

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GROTTO MINUTES AT A GLANCE

Thomas Hruska, Secretary

Regular Meeting January 11, 1984

Front Lobby Called to order: 7:40 PM

Attendance: 9 members and 1 guest

Adjourned: 8:45 PM

Treasury: \$411.38

The Iowa Grotto 35th anniversary was discussed. A picnic was suggested to be coordinated with the annual Coldwater Cave party in June. Mike Bounk will check with Pete deVries if the Iowa Grotto may have their anniversary celebration at Coldwater on the weekend of June 16 & 17, 1984. The party may include a keg of beer. The grotto received a letter from Carol Herington informing us that Harold had passed away from a heart attack on December 15, 1983. Harold's friendship and caving experience will be greatly missed. Greg McCarty reported on his trip to the Decorah area. Greg is planning a trip to Conrad Cave on January 13, 1984. Coldwater Cave on January 21 & 22.

Regular Meeting January 25, 1984

Room 267 Called to order: 7:45 PM

Attendance: 5 members and 2 guests

Adjourned: 8:50 PM

Treasury: \$411.38

Mike Bounk is still checking whether the Iowa Grotto 35th anniversary may be held at Coldwater Cave in June. A possible trip to Wonder Cave was discussed. The grotto will provide the cake. All other food for the weekend is the responsibility of each person. A slide show or a movie was proposed for a program. Barb am Ende has moved to 1812 Busch Court, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525. Greg McCarty and Steve Moon went to Conrad Cave on January 13, 1984. Mike Bounk reported on the trip to Coldwater Cave. The only future trip was Coldwater Cave on February 18 & 19, 1984. After the meeting, Mike Bounk presented a program on vertical rope techniques.

Regular Meeting February 8, 1984

Room 267 Called to order: 7:45 PM

Attendance: not taken

Adjourned: 8:25 PM

Treasury: \$411.38

Plans are taking shape for the Iowa Grotto 35th anniversary celebration to be held at Coldwater Cave on June 16, 1984. Arrangements will be made for the movies on Castleguard and Coldwater Cave. The anniversary cake and a keg will be provided by Mike Bounk. A vertical practice session may be planned at Duttons Cave Park for Sunday, June 17, 1984. The next Board of Governors meeting of the National Speleological Society will be held in Tuscon, Arizona, on February 25 & 26, 1984. No trip reports were given. The Coldwater Cave trip will be February 18 & 19, 1984. After the meeting, the color movie on Coldwater Cave was shown.

Regular Meeting February 22, 1984

Room 267 Called to order: 7:40 PM

Attendance: not taken

Adjourned: 8:20 PM

Treasury: \$411.38

Plans are continuing for the grotto's 35th anniversary. Mike Bounk has informed the Rockford people of the plans for films at the celebration. Steve Moon will try to get a magnetic sound track movie projector for the Coldwater film. Lowell Burkhead will try to get more slides for the program. A copy of the grotto constitution is still needed for our student organization status. Mike Bounk complimented Ed Smith on doing a good job of getting trip reports and Intercom articles computerized. Western Kentucky asked us for our continued interest in their activities. Mike Bounk and Gary Engh reported on their trip to Coldwater Cave. Mike Bounk and Greg McCarty proposed a trip to an undecided location for Saturday, March 10, 1984.

CONRAD CAVE YIELDS BREAKDOWN BREAKTHROUGH

January 13, 1984

by Greg McCarty

Steve Moon and Greg McCarty

Since the second semester hadn't started yet, Steve and I decided to take a trip on Friday. Naturally we went to my favorite digging hole. The purpose of this trip was to check out a lead that I had located on the last trip with Mike Bunk. After stopping at the owners house we drove Steve's Volkswagon along the lane toward the cave as far as the snow would allow. After stoking up on some food we grabbed our gear and walked the rest of the way to the cave. The lead in question was a passage that I spotted leading off the first room to the right from the entrance room. This passage was heading toward the valley outside the entrance, and was going a little down slope. It was far too small at the beginning, so the object was to dig it out enough that we could check it out.

When we first entered the cave, Steve did a little crawling around to refresh his memory (since he had only been in the cave once). Then we grabbed the tools and crawled down into the right-hand room. Since there was only room for one person to dig at one time, we decided to attack two places at once. While I dug in the intended passage, Steve would go to another part of the room and dig in a passage there. Mike and I voice and light connected this passage to one in another part of the cave on the previous trip. The only problem was that I had been on the other end of the connection, while Mike had been on this end. There were two holes leading in the right direction, but neither one had much going for it to say which was the right one. I decided to let Steve choose which one he liked, so I wouldn't be to blame for picking the wrong one.

We set about our appointed tasks, slowly filling the room (which wasn't exactly huge to begin with) with the dirt and rocks from our respective digs. After making a nice hole and gaining a few feet of passage, Steve decided he must be in the wrong spot and switched to the other hole. I was digging downslope and under a rock arch, so my progress was slower. After Steve had dug for some time in the other hole, he became discouraged with the prospects there also. We decided it was time to find out for sure which was which. I gave Steve directions on how to get to the other passage, then kept digging while he crawled around to the other end of the connection. This showed that the second hole was indeed the right one, but the length of the dig was longer than I had imagined when I was on the other end. Fortunately Conrad cave is one of the easiest digging caves around, so we persevered.

I finally succeeded in getting my passage large enough to attempt, but even after more work I still wasn't able to get very far. The passage curved back upslope, and could not be enlarged any farther at the top of that slope due to a rock ledge along the floor. I squeezed ahead and tried to see what was around the corner to the left in the little room a few feet in front of me. I couldn't make it, though. Steve is slimmer than me, so I had him give it a try. He was able to get a little farther, and could see most of the rest of the room. It went downslope to the left, and turned into an unpromising rat hole.

Time was running short, so we abandoned Steve's dig and headed into the old section of the cave. Steve had never seen this part. I was probing around for new leads along the way, and took a particular interest with the breakdown

section. While Steve went ahead beyond the breakdown, I crawled around and looked to see if there was any trace of passage leading away from this section. I found a hole that led back down at an angle that made it difficult to spot from a few feet away. Looking down in there I could see that it opened up and dropped through more breakdown down to what appeared to be a passage. I crawled back to the main route and called for Steve to come back. I looked down the breakdown slope and made sure there were no holes that would connect with the one I had found, but there were none to be seen. When Steve got back we crawled up to the hole, and I gave him some quick instruction on how to safely get through semi-stable breakdown. After I started through the hole, though, Steve lost interest in following due to the loose nature of things. It was safe enough, you just didn't want to mess with anything too much. I was all excited after I passed through the first layer of breakdown and could see what was ahead. I quickly made my way under the final set of slabs and could see large passage looming ahead. Maybe even walking passage within twenty feet. When Deb and I first got the lead for this cave there were rumors of large passage with formations, and of fallen rocks that had blocked the route. I felt sure that this was it. I yelled up to Steve what I had found, not understanding how he could keep from joining me (a couple trips to the back of Wet cave will fix that). It was then that we both started to get suspicious. Steve thought my voice was coming from the wrong direction, and I had just realized how things looked a tad familiar. I had crawled down into the heart of the breakdown pile, but had crawled out from under one of the bottom slabs back into the main passage. Not under it like I had hoped. Such is life! It was very exciting while it lasted, but it didn't last long. At least Steve got a big kick out of it.

We had to get Steve back to Iowa City for a Teaching Assistant meeting, so we exited the cave. We had an unwanted delay when Steve's car got stuck while he was turning around, but with some sticks and some pushing we soon had him out.

JANUARY COLD WATER TRIP

January 21,22, 1984

by Michael Bounk

Art Bettis, Gary Engh, Steve Moon, Larry Lane, David Gerboth, Sean Fitzgerald, Gerry Grier, Suzy Gunderson, Steve Hopkins, Jean Young, Dick Kellog, Stephen Streufers, Juy (last name unknown), and Michael Bounk

Friday night Art, Gary, Steve, and I drove up the Coldwater Cave shaft entrance shed and started both the wood-burning and oil-burning stoves. To get the oil stove to work, we had to wire the switch open which resulted in the stove running at full power.

Later that evening Larry Lane and David Gerboth from Minnesota arrived. The next morning after pushing Art's and Stan's cars up to the road, we went to Harmony for breakfast. After breakfast Sean and Gerry arrived and headed downstream to the Pillar of Light formation to scout it for photography. Sean and Gerry headed downstream on a tourist trip.

At about noon Dick and Jean arrived with Suzy, Steve, Juy, and Stephen, four

students from Luther College. Art, Steve, Gary, Dick, Jean, and I, along with the Luther students, entered the cave. Art and Steve headed upstream a short way into the North Snake Passage and then on upstream to the Crinoid pavement. The rest of us headed upstream to the Jumping Off Point. We all exited the cave about 5:00 PM.

Dick, Jean, and the Luther students headed home. The four of us then went to the Cafe Deluxe in Decorah for supper. The food was excellent as will be discussed in a report by Steve in this issue. Art headed home and the rest of us went back to the shed. Sean and Gerry had left and shortly thereafter Larry and David exited the cave.

The next morning after closing up the shaft and shed and visiting with Flatland's, Gary, Steve and I checked on the Blazer Sink. We found that the hole, that Greg McCarty chopped open two weeks earlier, had frozen closed. We chopped open a new hole and observed that the same amount of water was flowing into the sink as two weeks earlier. Although we did not enter the ice-roofed cave formed over the cave entrance, we could see that it was still open. Realizing that we could not accomplish anything until the flow stops, we returned to Iowa City.

EAGLE CAVE, WISCONSIN

February 10-12, 1984

by Tom Hruska

Boy Scouts and Leaders of Troop 24 in Cedar Rapids, and Tom Hruska

About 6:30 PM on Friday, February 10, 1984, the Boy Scouts and leaders of Troop 24 left Cedar Rapids. Their destination was Eagle Cave in Richland County, Wisconsin. During the winter months, the owners of this commercial cave open its doors to youth groups. They provide meals and entertainment in two buildings on the surface. Free run of the entire cave and sleeping accommodations are provided underground. Outdoors, there are many miles of hiking trails and several compass exercises to keep the visitors busy.

Travel on this Friday night was slow due to the ever increasing ground fog. The Scouts finally arrived shortly before 11:00 PM. I had previous commitments in Wisconsin so I was traveling alone from North Freedom, Wisconsin, to Eagle Cave. I started the trip at 9:00 PM, expecting to arrive in about one hour, but took almost two hours because of the fog. I arrived at the cave a few minutes after the Scouts.

We got checked in, paid our fees, and carried our duffle into the cave where we established our camping area. A trip was made back to the surface for a snack of hot chocolate and doughnuts. Most of us went to bed about 1:00 AM, but some of our boys, as well as boys from many of the other groups, felt it was more important to explore the surroundings.

We were up early on Saturday morning because we had been assigned the first of two meal shifts. After a breakfast of pancakes and sausage, we went the directions of our various interests. The famous sliding hill at Eagle Cave was

closed that morning after an accident caused by the rapidly melting snow and overuse of the hill. Luckily, after an examination at the hospital, the boy from another youth group was declared in good enough shape to return to the cave but he had a very sore back. Part of our group decided to enjoy the fine weather and started on the hiking trails and the compass exercises. I volunteered to lead the boys that wanted to visit the cave.

Inside the cave, I led the boys to various crawlways that I was familiar with from my visit to the cave two years earlier. In those two years, I had added about fifty pounds to my torso. Many of these crawlways were tight on the previous trip, so I knew that many of them would not cooperate with me now. I would start the Scouts into a hole, and then go to the location that I knew they would be exiting.

I took the boys to the loop passage that starts in the first room of the cave, goes down through several small rooms to a point about twenty feet below the concrete floor, then comes back up a crawlway to a crevice which returns you to the first room about thirty feet from where you started. I led the way down through the rooms with several of the boys following me. The other boys decided to make the trip in the reverse direction by starting down through the crevice. We met in the room at the low point. After a short rest, we made our way back up to the entrance room.

The next trip was led by some of the boys with me bringing up the rear. We went into the crawlways to the left of the door as you enter the cave. This series of crawlways take you out toward the face of the hillside at a level lower than the commercial cave entrance. I followed the boys back to a T intersection. The left side ended in a short distance but the right side continued up over a rock formation. One by one, the boys crawled up this rock, slide their feet to the far side, and slide feet first into the room on the far side. I tried the same thing, but my posterior wouldn't fit through the hole on the far side of the rock formation. I had to settle for sticking my head into the hole and asking the boys to tell me what was in this room and the passage beyond. The crawlway became too small for access, so everyone started the trip back out. I left my burning carbide light and hard hat in a crevice at the T intersection and crawled into the left passage where I sat in the dark. It was fun watching the boys go by, some never realizing that I was sitting there in the dark. I was the last one out of this area to the left of the cave entrance.

After a bunch of Sloppy Joes, I followed the Scoutmaster while he completed two more of the compass exercises. The latter was over one mile in length and completed the sixth exercise needed for the entire compass exercise. For this he received a round cloth patch with six segments that made up a ring around the circular patch.

All of this physical exercise at Eagle Cave, along with my long days Thursday and Friday working with the film crews from MGM/United Artists, made me tired. I returned to the cave and went to sleep for two hours.

We were served a chicken supper and then I said goodbye to everyone. I had to attend a Board of Directors meeting early on Sunday morning so I had no choice but to leave. Like the previous night, the fog was starting to get thick. That evening, after I had left, the owners of the cave had their "roast the leaders" presentations in the dining hall. At breakfast that morning

everyone was told to watch for unusual things that their leaders were doing during the day. For example, on a previous occasion one adult was observed wearing his wife's pantyhose because he didn't have any thermal underwear. Each roasted leader is presented with a plaque so that he and everyone else will not forget the reason for being roasted.

A strict curfew is observed in the cave on Saturday nights so everyone can make up for the sleep they lost on Friday night. After this, I can only speculate that they had a breakfast of eggs and sausage followed by more caving and surface activities. The boys and leaders of Troop 24 left Eagle Cave in the late morning on Sunday, February 12, and arrived back in Cedar Rapids by mid afternoon.

FEBRUARY 1984 COLD WATER TRIP

February 17-19, 1984

by Michael Bounk

Greg Sherf, Jim Klager, Orlando Schwartz, Alan V. Takes, Bill Watson, Michell Eyres, Greta Walker, Jane Vonnahme, Curtis C. Barnes, Cynthia R. Franyen, Mike Lane, Jerry Grier, Gary Engh, Larry Lane, Dave Gurvith, Bruce Foyer, Brad Turentine, Randy Morris, Phil Darthwiute, George Zachariasen, and Michael Bounk

Gary and I arrived at C.W. on Friday night (February 17). The next day four crews entered the cave. At about 11:30 AM a group lead by Bruce Foyer, which included Brad Turentine, Randy Morris and Phil Darthwiute, entered the cave. They went about 100 feet upstream to the Jumping Off Point, took a short trip up the North Snake Passage, and went downstream to the end of Pothole Country before exiting the cave at about 3:30 PM. They took 30 pictures on this trip.

Jerry Grier, who has been taking excellent large-format color photographs of the cave for a number of years, lead Alan Takes, Bill Watson, Michell Eyres, Greta Walker, Jane Vonnahme, Curtis Barnes, Cynthia Franyen, and Mike Lane on a tourist trip entering the cave about 12:45 PM and exiting later in the afternoon after seeing part of the main passage.

Gary Engh, Larry Lane and Dave Gurvith entered the cave about noon and headed up the Cascade Passage. They were stopped by high water and exited at about 9:30 PM.

George Zachariasen and I entered the cave at 1:45 PM and headed upstream to the Hoot Dome. At the dome we rigged a length of Goldline from the uppermost bolt. I ascended the rope and set another bolt and drilled a part of hole for still another bolt before becoming too tired to continue. I then had to descend. The problem is that we are now beginning to bolt laterally across wall to the passage to our right. This produces more muscle strain than bolting straight up does. We exited the cave at 6:20 PM. On Sunday Gary Engh and I returned to Iowa City.

HUNTER'S CAVE

February 25,26, 1984

by Tom Hruska

Scouts and leaders of Troop 80 from Cedar Rapids, and Tom Hruska

Shortly after 8:00 AM on Saturday, February 25, the Boy Scouts of Troop 80 in Cedar Rapids along with their leaders and guide Tom Hruska started the hour and one-half long drive to Hunter's Cave in Jackson County. The owner of the cave, Attalas Steines, had been contacted about one month earlier concerning the visit to his property. He doesn't live on the property any more and was finally located in Bellevue, Iowa. During our telephone conversation, Mr. Steines informed me that he doesn't "give permission" to visit Hunter's Cave but he can't keep you out. This attitude seems to satisfy his insurance man.

Upon arriving at the property, we hauled our caving gear and sleeping bags down to the Main Room of the cave. Near the county road where we were parked, we located a large wood cable spool in the field. We decided to do our cooking at this location, using the spool as a table. Since it was late morning, we decided to have lunch before we started crawling in the cave. A meal of roast beef, potatoes, and mixed vegetables was prepared and consumed.

We entered the cave about 1:00 in the afternoon. The first objective was a trip to the Skull Room. The smaller boys made the trip with ease while the bigger boys, me included, found it more of a challenge. I discovered that the fifty pounds or so that I had added to my body, much of it around the middle, made those holes and crawlways a lot smaller than I had remembered them. One of the adults decided that the walls were a little too close for comfort. He went back to the security of the Main Room. Everyone else that started the trip to the Skull Room made the trip to the end. Climbing over Rupture Rock and then dropping out of sight behind the rock proved to be a challenge for most of the boys. The smaller boys were helped down into the Canyon Room. I was in the lead when we approached the Skull Room. I tried going through the narrow opening into the Skull Room, but gave up the attempt. The boys went past me and disappeared through the hole. The size of the boys going through kept getting bigger, and then two of the leaders went through into the Skull Room. If they can make it, I can make it. My second attempt was made on the opposite side and I made it without too much trouble. While everyone was in the Skull Room, I had everyone turn off their lights. Their first experience with total darkness fascinated them. Up to this time they only thought they had experienced total darkness. The trip back to the main room was uneventful.

The next objective was a visit to the Paradise Room. I had complained about the holes getting smaller on the way to the Skull Room. Now I am looking at the siphon going into the Paradise Room and it looked bigger than I had remembered. Maybe enough people had been crawling around through this hole and taking enough dirt out on their clothes to make the hole grow in size. We made our way through the belly crawls to the second siphon. A trip through this opening brought us into the Paradise Room. (Ed. Note: actually the room before the second 'siphon' is the location of the Paradise Room) After the Scouts had explored the room in all directions, we made our way back to the Main Room. The boys that were assigned duty for supper departed the cave.

The rest of us started the crawling trip to the Fossil Room. The trench was a breeze for the boys, but it seemed to be getting narrower for this fat man. Before we got to the room where you have to make a square turn to the left, I explained to the boys what they had to do to make the sharp corner. The boys followed me all the way to the Fossil Room. One of the boys asked why the room was called the Fossil Room. I pointed to the formation in the ceiling. After a short rest, we started out with me bringing up the rear. As the boys went through the Pendulum Room, I yelled forward to ask if they had stood up. Their thoughts had been so intense on crawling along the floor, they didn't realize the ceiling was high enough to stand up. Upon arriving back at the Pit Room we discovered it was time to go to supper.

Back at the cable spool, we found our supper waiting for us. Beef Stroganoff was on the menu. We managed to finish eating and get everything cleaned up before sunset. The entire group then returned to the cave.

After supper, I led another group of boys into the Paradise Room area. Upon reaching the end of the trip, I told the boys to lead the way out. After several false starts, they did find their way out. This proved to them the need to remain oriented and to take many mental notes about the passage as you enter.

Camp was set up in the back portion of the Main Room. I was tired and went to bed about 8:00 in the evening. Some of the others were laying around listening to the Hawk's game on radio. Still others decided to see more of the cave.

The breakfast crew broke camp early and went to their chores at the cable spool. The night had been cold enough that the boys found ice chunks in the water jugs. A breakfast of oatmeal and applesauce was prepared. I was the last to break camp and the last to eat. After all of the dishes had been washed, we decided to start for home. We arrived back in Cedar Rapids about 11:00 in the morning on Sunday, February 26, 1984.

