

The Near Normal News is published by the Near Normal Grotto #363, P.O. Box 813, Normal, IL 61761. Subscription price is \$10/year or free with the purchase of a grotto membership (also \$10/year). Issues are published in January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Editors:

Graphics Editor: Brian R. Braye
brbraye@ilstu.edu

Copy Editor: Jeffery Gosnell
jeffery@greatoakscamp.org

Science Editor: John Marquart
marquart@uiuc.edu

The Near Normal Grotto meets on the second Friday of each month at 7 P.M. in the Community Room of The National City Bank, 202 E. Washington, Bloomington, IL. Adverse weather, holidays, and our annual September picnic may affect meeting times. Our website address is <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/grotto/nng.htm>.

2003 Executive Committee:

President: Troy Simpson

Vice-President: John Schirle

Secretary: Jim Jacobs

Treasurer: David Carson

Member at Large: Marc Tiritilli

The Near Normal Grotto is part of the National Speleological Society (NSS). We encourage all persons interested in caving to join the (NSS). Membership is \$35/year. Members receive the NSS News (monthly) and other caving publications.

National Speleological Society

2813 Cave Avenue

Huntsville, AL 35810-4431

Phone: (205) 852-1300

www.caves.org

On The Cover: Jim Jacobs dressed for play and dressed for ????. Jeff Gosnell photo (inset).

ARTICLE SUBMISSION INFO

We accept most cave-related submissions. Equipment reviews, scientific articles, trip reports, announcements, cartoons, artwork, and pictures are all welcome. Most submissions must be received by the last Friday of the month prior to publication. Scientific submissions need extra time for review.

Photographic and graphic submissions may be sent to Brian Braye at brbraye@ilstu.edu. Generally, photographs should be in JPEG format. Check with Brian if your photograph or graphic uses a different program. Photographs should list the cave, general location (ex. Southern Illinois, or Washington Co, IN.), names of any persons included in the photo, and name of the photographer. Graphics on disk may be mailed to 1503 S. Madison, Bloomington, IL 61701.

Written submissions may be submitted to Jeffery Gosnell at jeffery@greatoakscamp.org. Submissions may be sent as an attachment using Microsoft Works®, Microsoft Word®, or plain ASCII (DOS-text), or incorporated directly into an e-mailed text message. Articles on disk may be mailed to 1380 County Road 900N, Lacon, IL 61540. If you are uncomfortable with your writing ability, simply put together a basic account of the trip—ignoring spelling, grammar, and punctuation—and request the editor to help draft the finished product.

Scientific and Technical articles are expected to be of a high standard, citing evidence of statements and crediting references, where appropriate.

FROM A HOLE IN THE GROUND

Jim Jacobs



FROM A HOLE IN THE GROUND

Jim Jacobs

In the eleven years that I've been editor of the Near Normal News, I've written over sixty columns. Some of them have flowed easily. For many, I had to labor a bit to find what I hoped were the right words. This will likely be the toughest one of all, because it will be my last. Or at least the last regularly scheduled submission, anyway. I may throw one in every now and then, just to shake up the troops, but as of this issue, I have retired as editor. I don't want to dwell on how much work it's been, because it's been a lot of fun, and my NNG-mates have always been quick to let Brian and I know that they enjoyed the NEWS, and have frequently complemented us on the quality over the years. I've never felt unappreciated for the work I've done for the grotto, and that's one of the things that's made it easy to keep it going for all these years. The other important thing is that I've always known that there were others out there doing even more work for the NNG. I just had to write about it.

I've also decided that I won't stand for re-election as Secretary this time around. Believe me, I'm not upset at anyone about anything. It's just time to get some new blood in here with new ideas to re-energize things. I've enjoyed being a NNG'r as much as anything that I've done during my lifetime, and I plan to remain as an active member. I've been the Secretary for the grotto's lifetime, with the exception of the two years that Brian Braye was Secretary before he became President. During that time, I served as Treasurer. When Brian was elected President, I was re-elected as Secretary.

During these eleven years, I've seen a lot of members come and go. We've had some real quality people in this group, and I've been fortunate to be able count you as my friends. And we've made some fond memories... (in no special order)

- The grotto weekend at Onondaga Cave State Park. This was one NNG trip that rain did not attempt to ruin. We had the campground pretty much to ourselves, and had a great time around a huge campfire the first night. Some very funny people were in rare form. We saw some caves, did some rappelling from some 100+ft. cliffs, and canoed. For Marty and I, it was our first time in a canoe together, and of course we swamped within five

minutes. The current took us under some overhanging tree branches, and we ended up sideways and wet. Luckily, the water was only about three feet deep, so we were in no danger, but our embarrassment factor went off the chart. Marty had a tough choice to make. She saw my cigarettes floating by in a water-tight baggie. She had to choose between putting up with my smoking, or my gouching. She rescued the smokes. As you probably know, I quit a long time ago (1997), but at the time, it was a real issue.

- The Smittle Cave weekend trip. Rain did a number on this one, but there were some good times anyway. Marty packed her bags, but forgot to put one of them in the car, so she had to make do with limited changes of clothes. It got really cold. So cold that D.C.Young had ice on his tent, and this was Missouri in September. Dave Mahon had us all in stitches with his carbide light reflector made from a large stainless-steel salad bowl. It was just for show. He didn't really use it. We had a great afternoon of vertical practice over the mouth of Smittle. Due to the heavy rain, some of us decided to forgo the Sunday trip into Smittle, and drive home. We were determined to get in some caving, so we stopped at Onondaga Cave. Helmets, headlights, mud and all. We had some nervous tour guides that night. But once they were convinced that we weren't going to scatter into dark passageways the minute their backs were turned, they had fun with it. The trip home was fun, because it was driving rain, and the defrosters on my old Ford van ("The Butterscotch Beast") did nothing but fog the windows. I had to drive with one hand and wipe my side of the windshield with the other. Marty did her half, but it was a really big windshield.

- The Wayne's Lost Cave trip in February. Snow was deep on the ground, and while we were in the cave, the temperature dropped to 20 degrees, and the wind kicked up to 20 mph. We exited the cave wet and muddy, as usual. Talking about COLD! My coveralls froze to the tailgate of my truck as I sat there with numb, frozen fingers trying to untie frozen bootlaces. It had been a good Wayne's trip up until that point. It then became unforgettable. Instant hypothermia. We finally got into the cab of my truck, and got it started, but it was ten minutes before I could even feel the heat on my hands.

- The time I almost fell off a twenty-foot ledge in Keller Cave because I knocked

my headlight off my helmet while trying to shift my pack to the other side. Marty was right behind me, and coolly talked me back into a safe position so that I could relax and shift things around.

- The many trips to Illinois Caverns with Armin hanging around bumming food. He often let us camp overnight on his property, which was adjacent to the Cave property, and even jumped in the car with us and showed us where a cave was one day. What a character he was! We'd wake up and began to cook breakfast, and Armin would appear like magic! We gladly shared our food with him.

- The rain-shortened Memorial Day weekend at Cave River Valley. (Another cold and wet one) Somehow, we managed to visit Endless and Flowstone Caves, and did the through trip of Lamplighter. I'll never forget the connection passage, called the Combat Crawl, which was a sleazy, greasy, hands and knees crawling up to your neck in mud and water sort of thing. Yechhh! It was fun, though!

- The many Mammoth Cave week-long field camps, and the weekends as well. But the most memorable of them all was the "reward" trip that we took to Floyd Collins' Crystal Cave. That was the night that John Marquart stepped on a shelf that broke under his weight, and caused him to slide into a crevice. The good news: he braced with his arms, which stopped him from slipping further into the canyon. The bad news: by stopping this way, he dislocated his shoulder upwards about an inch. This initiated the largest cave rescue in Mammoth Cave National Park history. (Floyd's tragedy took place outside of the Park). Alas! I never got to see Floyd's Lost Passage. I think that I got within twenty feet of it, but I'm not positive where I was. I was just taking a break, wandering around while we were waiting for the rescue team to arrive.

- We've had a lot of fun at meetings, too! We've been privileged to see some world-class presentations and slide shows at our grotto meetings, many by Don Coons. John Marquart has done various versions of his "Chemistry of Caves" presentation at meetings, and he has taken this show all around the country for the American Chemical Association. Earl Neller presented a slide show of caving in the 1950's! Professional shows on bats, and many more. Of course, it wasn't all work and no play. I remember that some of the meetings while Norm Rogers was President were a

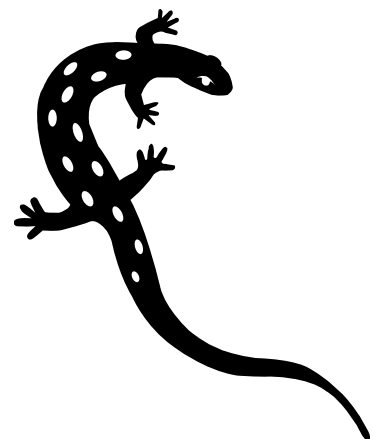
lot of fun. I had Norm's number, and he had mine. Sometimes we were laughing so hard from trying to top each other with insults that we had a hard time getting the meeting back on track again. But that part never made it into the minutes for some reason.

- My first vertical trip. Kevin Rasmus organized the trip, but people dropped out, and it ended up with only Kevin and I. We went to Indiana, and that morning, went looking for some pit in the woods that Kevin thought he knew about. We got separated, and I got totally lost. We never did find the pit, but luckily after a while, I finally found a house, and a friendly guy who took me in his car back to where Kevin was waiting by my car. I never did go on a trip without a compass again. We then went to Shaft Cave, and had a thoroughly enjoyable vertical trip, doing two drops. There's more to Shaft Cave than just the shaft.

- I could probably go on like this for a very long time, but the reality is that all this was possible only because the Near Normal Grotto, here in the middle of the great corn desert (thanks, Steve) has attracted some of the finest people that I've been ever associated with. That's the bottom line.

But it's someone else's turn now. I want to thank Brian Braye for all of his hard work on the NEWS. He brought technical expertise and layout experience that I lacked, and together, we made a pretty fair team. I'd like to thank Jeffrey Gosnell, who has enthusiastically volunteered to take over as Editor-in-Chief. Current President Troy Simpson and Vice-President John Shirle have already volunteered to assist. My baby is in good hands. Thank you all!

Jim



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

July 11, 2003

Called to order at 7:15 by President Troy Simpson. Present: Marc Tiritilli, Jim Jacobs, Don Cons, John Walther, Bill Morrow, Tracy L. Tiritilli, Amy Simpson, Sheri L. Athirs-Dikla, Don Kerouac, Ambra Deerey, Ralph Sawyer.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS:

SECRETARY - Jim Jacobs. The minutes of the May meeting were read and approved. This was not done at the June meeting, because there was not a quorum and no official business could be conducted. Likewise, there are no minutes from the June meeting. Informal discussions were held

TREASURER - The treasurer's report was delivered by President Simpson since Dave Carson could not attend.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Jim J. announced that there was no July newsletter because no articles had been submitted. He also announced that he was retiring as Editor as soon as a replacement could be found. The President thanked Jim for doing such a great job with the Near Normal News over the years, and said that he felt bad that the first missed newsletter took place while he was presiding. He encouraged all members to submit something whenever they participated in a caving activity, because the newsletter can only be as good as the members make it.

- Don Coons reported that Jim Jacobs had been elected to the Board of Directors of the Karst Conservancy of Illinois, and was named editor of their newsletter. Individual memberships in the KCI are \$25. The KCI Board has not yet determined other membership types and levels such as institutional memberships. He stated that they are attempting to ensure that \$23 of the \$25 membership goes directly into cave projects. The mortgage for their first cave purchase (Pautler Cave) has been paid down from the original \$36,000 to nearly \$5,000. That's going so well, that they're thinking about a new project for the near future. The Pautler Cave Natural Area consists of three acres of woods in addition to the cave/sinkhole. Surveys must be done of the cave, and inventories are being taken of the area's biological and botanical population. Since this area is contiguous to a housing development, the boundaries need to be marked so that the

neighbors will not continue to mow into the fringes of the area that the KCI wishes to return to its natural state.

- Troy S. proposed the the NNG join the KCI as an institutional member as soon as it is available. Proposal carried unanimously.

- There is a Hodag hunt in Wisconsin the 2nd week of September.

- Troy proposed changing the August meeting from the 8th to the 3rd so that we could have the meeting outdoors at the tower just before the vertical practice. This will allow our out-of-town members (the vast majority) to attend both without having to drive all the way to Bloomington/Normal twice in a week. The proposal was approved by all in attendance. Troy stated that he intended to also take an email poll of the rest of the membership and pass the word that way.

- We discussed having the annual picnic the second weekend of September (6th and 7th). Troy will contact Larry Bird to see if the canyon area near Utica is available again. Marc wants to also hold the NSS vertical training class that weekend, so that those attending can then practice on the cliffs there.

- John Walther asked if there might be any interest by the NNG in sponsoring the McLean County Fair "Geology Exhibit Award". He will gather additional information for next year.

- Don C. spent some time down at Mammoth Cave doing some surveying with the CRF. They worked on an area called, "Emily's Puzzle".

The meeting was adjourned. Marc Tiritilli presented a slide show on cave rescue.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 3, 2003

This meeting took place at the ISU vertical tower. Members present: Troy Simpson (President), Ralph Sawyer, Kevin and Andrew Rasmus, Don Kerouac, Ambra Deering, Vertical Coordinator Marc Tiritilli (Board member at large) Jeffrey Gosnell, Jim Jacobs (Secretary). Guests: Justin Irvin (& friend), Linda Mark (Chicago), Jesse Barr, John Roth and Paul Wojcinski (Iowa), Jim Hedrick (Champaign).

OFFICER'S REPORTS

The minutes from July were read by Jim Jacobs and approved.

The Treasurer was not present. A check of the airports verified that he has NOT flown

to Brazil with the treasury.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- It was announced that Jeffrey Gosnell will take over as Editor-in-Chief of the Near Normal News, replacing Jim Jacobs, who is retiring from the position.

- The annual picnic will be held on Sunday, September 7th at Utica, Illinois. We plan to eat at 1:00pm, but member may arrive earlier than that for socializing and fun. As we did last year, the meeting will be held at the picnic. It will probably NOT last long. I think last year set a record. (About four minutes.) Marc will circulate information and maps via email.

- The vertical training workshop will be held the day before the picnic at the same location. That way, member will be able to hone their skills on a real cliff. Contact Marc for information.

- The Board moved to spend \$90 for vertical manuals and materials from the NSS.

Adjourned.

We then had a heck of a great day going up and down ropes!

Ramblings of a Troglodene

Jeffery Gosnell

A Tribute To Our Past

For most of us, word of Jim Jacob's "retirement" from editing The Near Normal News came as quite a surprise. After all, he began as editor with the first issue in November 1991, and, with one exception, he has edited all 69 issues.

I have heard Jim refer to the NNN as his "baby." Having recently become a father, his analogy brings to mind long days, late nights, and countless hours of thankless work. In the early days of the NNN, Jim put in 20+ hours of volunteer labor to publish just one issue. It was not until Brian Braye joined the editorial team in 1993 that the workload lessened, but even then, the looming deadline of each issue demanded much of Jim's free time.

Like watching a baby grow up and become independent, Jim's leaving the NNN is a hard transition. However, I believe his decision reflects his sincere desire to see the NNN and the Near Normal Grotto continue for future generations. In the August NSS News, Evelyn Bradshaw writes "A healthy grotto encourages the participation of the young. Some of the older members may work well with the younger members." That is exactly how I would describe Jim, an experienced caver

who is happy to pass on his knowledge and responsibilities to the next generation of hole crawlers.

A few paragraphs is hardly enough to pay tribute for the years of service Jim has given the grotto through *The Near Normal News*. As the new editor, I can only hope to honor Jim by doing the best job possible.

Jim, your baby will be taken care of.

Looking To The Future

Without Jim's service the NNN would not have existed for twelve years, but its ownership still belongs to the members of the Near Normal Grotto. This is your newsletter, and its ultimate success or failure lies in the hands of the membership.

As you know, the July 2003 issue was cancelled due to a lack of submissions. Jim simply did not have anything to print. Despite our being the grotto trapped in the "Great Corn Desert," our membership is fairly active. However, trip reports have not reflected the amount of activity taking place each year. I hope the cancellation of the July issue has served as a wake up call and that more of you will take an evening to sit down and share your experiences with the rest of us.

As the new copy editor, here are some of the things I would like to see more of in future issues of the NNN:

Trip Reports—These will always be my favorite articles, especially when they are peppered with humorous anecdotes (like the time Troy Simpson called for an emergency meeting deep inside Illinois Caverns to declare war on another grotto).

Trip Announcements—While many of our trips are thrown together at the last minute, I would like to see some trips announced far enough in advance that others can make plans to attend.

Equipment Reviews—Do you have a new headlamp? Vertical gear? How about "bomb proof" knee pads? Then tell the rest of us about it. Your two cents might save the rest of us some money (or get us to spend some).

Technical Articles—I am honestly interested when some of you begin chatting about switching your Petzl Zoom® over to a 2,000,000 LED-array bright enough to illuminate the city of Normal for 60 years on a single AAA battery. The same goes for cave photography and vertical instruction. Many of the articles I find discussing such topics are written by "experts" to other

"experts." I would love to see the *Idiot's Guide* version of technical articles written for the laypersons in our grotto.

Scientific Articles—We are privileged to have chemists, geologists, and biologists in our midst. We want to hear from you (And, on a personal note to our scientists, I am always available to carry gear for you into Fogelpole or Lechiguilla.).

Art Work and Cartoons—The NNN is not published by professionals (No, my fulltime job is not editing *Time Magazine*.). So send us your doodlings.

Photographs—The May 2003 issue of the NNN had only three photos. One picture says a 1,000 words. So let's start talking!

In This Issue

Jim Jacobs bids us farewell as editor of the NNN in the last regular installment of *From a hole in the ground*.

President Troy Simpson speaks from *In the Twilight Zone*.

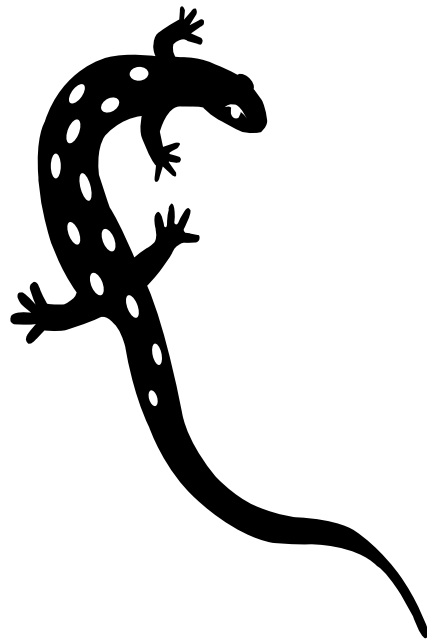
Our new regular column *Near Normal Neighbors* interviews NNG secretary and retiring editor Jim Jacobs.

Beth Reinke conveys the secret to getting free passes at Marengo Cave in her trip report.

Bill Morrow rises from the muddy depths of Pautler Cave to update us on his survey trip.

(Endnotes)

1 "Why Are There Not More Grottos?", *NSS News*, August 2003, p. 226



In the Twilight Zone

By Troy J. Simpson

Another summer comes to an end and a new school year is upon us (at least for those who count school as a way of life!). It has been an exciting summer for many of us. On a personal level, I am now a happily married man. Amy and I took off for San Francisco for our honeymoon. I would highly recommend a visit! We did all of the tourist things, Fisherman's Wharf, Golden Gate Park, Cable Cars, etc... Also sneaked out to Yosemite for a couple days. We did manage some quasi-caving as we journeyed through one of the inlet bore-holes that once fed the Historic Sutro Bathhouse. My only regret is that we left a month too soon and missed the NSS National Convention just down the road in Porterville. I believe we did have some representation though as Don Coons and Steve Taylor were planning on making a trip over.

Speaking of Don, the Karst Conservancy of Illinois has nearly paid off the debt for Pautler Cave. Work is being done on cleaning up the property and surveying the cave. Members of the NNG have already helped with the preliminary surveying, and I am looking forward to getting a crack at it towards the end of August.

The Indiana Karst Conservancy has purchased Wayne's Lost Cave! If you are interested in finding out more about it, check out www.ikc.org. I am hoping to plan a trip over there in the near future.

The August vertical practice was a great success. I received a lot of positive responses about combining it with the monthly grotto meeting. We had many new faces and look forward to more outings of a similar fashion.

O.K., segwaying into outings, the annual Near Normal Grotto picnic is Sunday, September 7 at 1:00 p.m. at the Clark Falls Farm in Utica, IL. The picnic is the same location as last year. I will be sending directions to everybody, and it will be posted on the website. On the agenda is a bring-your-own-lunch picnic, followed by vertical practice on the cliffs, and Larry Bird is arranging for the always popular mine exploration (stable limestone). The day before will be a formal vertical training class conducted by Marc Tiritilli. It will begin on Saturday, September 6 between 10:00-11:00 a.m., lasting throughout the day. The class also will be conducted at the Clark Falls Farm, and we will be



A selection of photos from the Grotto's rappell training at ISU's tower. Photos by Jim Jacobs and Jeffery Gosnell.



camping out there. The cost will be \$5 to cover material expenses. This is a great opportunity to get formal training if you have always wanted to.

A couple last items... I would like to welcome aboard, Jeffery Gosnell as our editor. Jim Jacobs has stepped down after 11 years as serving as editor of The Near Normal News. Jim has done a great job at helping put together a great newsletter and his editorial-ship will be missed. Jeffery as jumped in with both feet and we look forward to seeing a great tradition carry on!

Finally, I have been counting down, as I am looking at writing my last two columns as grotto president. I know, it's only September, but it is time to start looking around the grotto and see who you feel will best take on the reins of presidency, as due to grotto by-laws, one can only serve two consecutive terms as president. Official nominations for all board positions will be accepted at the November Grotto meeting.

Well, that is about it for now. I'm looking forward to the seeing you all at the grotto picnic!!!

-The Pres.
Troy J. Simpson

NEAR NORMAL NEIGHBORS

From the editor:

The corn fields of Illinois is a strange place to find people with a passion for caves and caving. Yet, for the past 12 years, the Near Normal Grotto has brought together central Illinois' cavers. I believe knowing who we are and building healthy relationships will help the grotto continue for decades to come. I hope that our new series, Near Normal Neighbors, will serve to further that goal.

Much of the success of the grotto is due to The Near Normal News and to the hard work of Jim Jacobs. Jim (along with his wife, Marty) is a founding member of the Near Normal Grotto and the creator of The Near Normal News. It seemed a fitting tribute that the first "Near Normal Neighbors" column be an interview with our retiring editor.

How and when did you first become interested in caving?

In 1989, while motoring down Old Route 66 near Pontiac, Marty and I spotted an old barn, which had been painted with an

ad for Meramec Cavern many years ago. A couple of weeks later, we found ourselves taking a long weekend to see a couple of Missouri commercial caves. After touring Meramec Cavern, we also visited Onoondaga Cave and Fischer Cave.

Fischer had no lights. We actually had to carry flashlights. They spaced them out so that one out of four or five people in line had a light. We even had to duck down a few times to keep from hitting our heads on low-hanging formations. This was some pretty wild stuff.

What was your first wild cave?

I had an opportunity to sign up for a wild cave trip to Buckner's Cave through the Illinois State University Outdoor Recreation Program. They actually issued carbide lamps if we wanted to use them. Of course, none of us had a clue how to deal with those finicky beasts. So we had a real hassle trying to keep them lit. Not trusting the carbide, I took along a cheap hand lantern, which ran on a dry cell battery. I was glad I did, because I was only able to keep the carbide lamp going for a short time. The rest of the time, it was dead weight on my helmet.

Have you ever used a carbide lamp since?

I hate the smell of carbide. It's not a problem in well-ventilated areas, but I dislike following carbide cavers in tight crawlways, because it makes me nauseous when the gasses are concentrated. I've had to miss seeing a couple of nice formation rooms, particularly on one trip in Wayne's Lost Cave because the room was already full of carbide cavers, and when I followed them in, that's all you could smell, and it started to make me sick. I had to back out.

What else can you tell me about that first trip?

Buckner's has a long crawlway (around 450 feet). By the time we got out of there, I was pooped! We had gotten lost numerous times. When Marty asked me how it was, I told her that she would have lost her sense of humor about half-way through.

She and I went to Buckner's a few months later, along with a grandson and my brother. After we got lost and had passed a certain formation for the third time, she did lose her sense of humor (temporarily.) She snatched the map from my hand saying, "Give me that thing!" Some more experienced folks helped us to the way out. It wasn't until later that we realized that getting off route in Buckner's is half

the fun. And we got to the point that she could lead trips through the cave, and has done so. When we got to the point that we no longer got lost, we quit going there. And after doing Wayne's Lost, I quit complaining about Buckner's crawlway.

Where all have you caved?

We've visited caves in southern Illinois, Missouri, southern Indiana, New Mexico and Kentucky. We even visited a commercial cave in Germany. It was sort of funny. We were in a very large tour group, and the guide was up front giving the tour in German, and I was in the back doing it in English.

What is your favorite cave?

On the local scene, it's got to be Illinois Caverns. It's a beautiful cave, and you can make your trip a short sweet one, or you can spend hours exploring all of the side passages and work your butt off (Or at least you could before they started limiting the visitation hours.). Otherwise, Mammoth is the Cave. There's nothing else like it in the world.

Have you had any close calls over the past 14 years?

Just one scary moment. We were in Keller Cave, and there is an area where you are following a narrow ledge around a corner, about twenty feet above the stream. I had my pack on my left side, but it was against the wall, and was pushing me out from the ledge. I went to take it off to shift it over to my right side, but in doing so, it knocked my light off my helmet, and I got one arm hung up. The light was still attached, but it was dangling from the rear of my helmet, doing me no good at all. So there I was, standing exposed on a narrow ledge and blind as a bat. Luckily, Marty was right behind me, and was able to talk me back to a safe spot where I could sit down and get everything situated correctly. My article on this trip was reprinted in the 1994 SpeleoDigest.

How did you become involved with the Near Normal Grotto?

Marty mentioned that we had a phone call from someone named John Walther, who had found our names in the NSS Members Manual. He wanted to know if we were interested in starting a grotto. I thought, "Nice idea, but there can't be enough people around here who are interested in caving to make it work." I so doubted that the idea had any merit, I didn't get around to answering John's call till a few days later. However, after my first dubious reaction, I realized that I

did know one person who caved, Clay Johnson, and I had also heard of another, Dr. Ted Century.

John and I made arrangements to meet for coffee in a few days. In the meantime we would keep prospecting for members. The call I made to Clay Johnson was golden. Not only was he interested, he also gave me the names and numbers of the friends that he caved with: Kevin Rasmus, Walt Rudy, and Tim Mikesell.

At our first planning meeting, October 21 [1991] we decided to have the organizational meeting on November 18 at the Normal Public Library, and we split up the publicity duties. I volunteered to do a newsletter and draft a constitution and by-laws.

So you've served on the Executive Committee since the grotto's inception?

I was the first Secretary. For a couple of years I switched to Treasurer while Brian Braye was Secretary. Then I switched back to Secretary when he became President. I've been Editor of The New Normal News from the beginning.

What caused you to volunteer for the editing duties of what would become The Near Normal News?

I enjoy writing, and just thought that it would be fun to try to do a newsletter for the grotto. So I volunteered to be Secretary and newsletter editor. I guessed that it would be very important that we have one. I didn't realize how much work it would be.

What were your early aspirations for the newsletter?

Honestly, I had no idea of what I was getting myself into, and had no expectations as to what it could become. It was the first time I had ever tried anything like this, and it just sort of grew over the years with the grotto. I did everything the first few years, from editing and writing articles to printing, stapling, stamping, addressing and mailing. Thankfully, the advance of computer technology made this something that you could do at home, and still put out a fairly good product. It was rather crude at first, but Brian Braye helped tremendously in that area when he came on board. And beside his technological abilities, he has been a good partner in publishing the NNN.

I'm quite proud of what we've done with it over the years, considering we were pretty much flying by the seat of our pants, making it up as we went along. But we were always open to suggestions and

submissions from the members. It was important to us that the NEWS reflected what the members wanted it to be. And for almost seventy issues, I believe that it has been. I'm sure that it will continue to be.

In the November 2001 issue, Brian Braye published several pictures of you on a bike trip. Aside from caving, what other activities fill your life?

I've done a lot of bowling over the years, and until the last few years, played in bands all my life, mostly on weekends (guitar, bass, sax, a little bit of keyboards). Marty and I spend a lot of time on our bicycles. I've done over 500 miles since May.

What's left for you in caving?

We don't do as much caving as we used to, and I've taken on some other responsibilities on the Karst Conservancy of Illinois (KCI) board, including trying to get their newsletter, The Illinois Cave Watch, up and running. I plan to still stay active in the grotto, but it's time for me to faze out of editing the News, and I don't plan to continue as Secretary next year. It's been a great run, but it's time for some new folks to take the ball. The NNG has some very good people ready and able to take over, and it's their turn.

Looking back, it's clear that my involvement in helping to organize and being part of The Near Normal Grotto has been one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life. I'm really glad that I've had the opportunity to be part of it.

Ah, the places we've been, the people we've known, and the things we've done! It's all there, in the back issues of the Near Normal News. Quite a diary, eh?

Julie and Beth Finally Go Caving – Sort Of

By Beth Reinke

Although it meant missing the joint Vertical Practice/August NNG Meeting, I finally got back underground the weekend of August 1-3, 2003, when my favorite caving buddy, Julie Angel, and I took a weekend journey to Kentucky and southern Indiana. Since we both missed Mammoth Cave Restoration Field Camp (Julie recovering from major surgery, and me in Colorado at a family reunion), we both needed a Mammoth-fix. As the title of this article indicates, we "sort-of" went caving—Julie more so than I since she

actually packed her helmet and headlamp. I brought my mini-maglite and wintergreen lifesavers.

We left Champaign mid-afternoon Friday and "roughed it" at the actually quite-swanky Hampton Inn in Horse Cave, Kentucky Friday and Saturday nights. First thing Saturday, we headed into Horse Cave to the American Cave Museum and Hidden River Cave. We both marveled at how much the museum and cave have changed since we helped the American Cave Conservation Association (ACCA) staff move into their new offices, build a stone wall, and landscape the entrance to Hidden River Cave during the 1995 and 1996 Mammoth restoration camps.

The commercial Hidden River Cave tour (complete with a high-and-dry, weather resistant boardwalk) now goes downstream as far as the first dome. Our tour guide was jealous when we told her we had actually been further down the passage all the way to Sunset dome (a reward trip for our restoration camp volunteer work). Apparently access past the first dome is very restricted due to liability issues, since the ACCA does not yet own or have access rights to the land over that part of the cave. Two not-so-pleasant memories also resurfaced during our visit. A train rumbled by overhead while we were at the furthest point of the tour, giving all of us a bit of a start (We imagined it sounded like a wall of water up-stream during a flash-flood.). Also, by the time we got back to the surface, Julie and I both had a bit of a headache—reminiscent of previous visits when the air quality in and around the cave was still not quite up-to-par, due to lingering pollution issues.

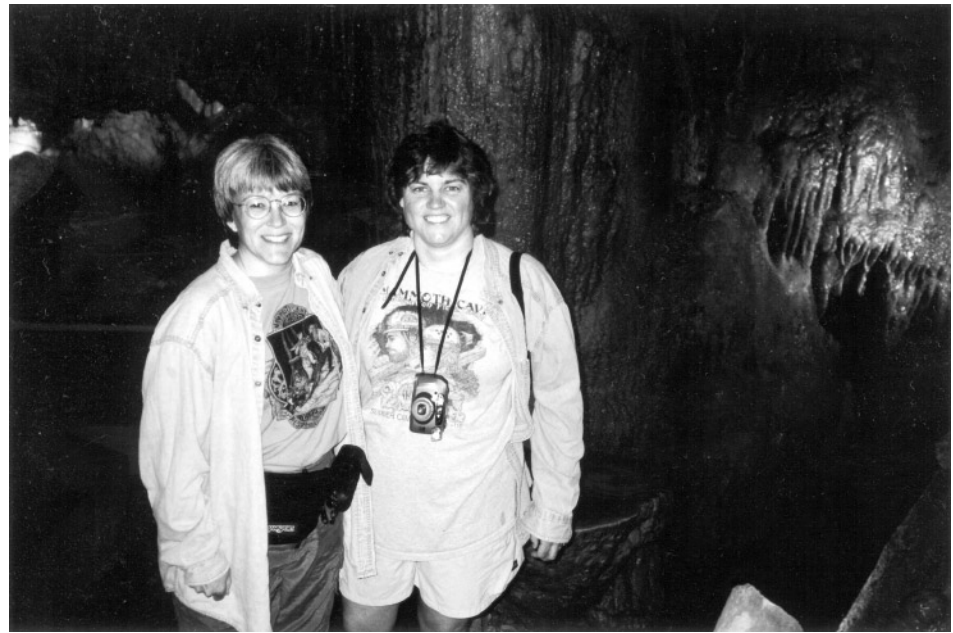
We headed to Park City, Kentucky and Diamond Caverns next. Julie had already toured the cave, but it was my first visit to this beautiful and highly decorated cave. Our only complaint was the tour guide's response to an inquiry about whether bats inhabited the cave. He gave an emphatic "No!" and amended his exclamation with a statement indicating that he would be in jail [for killing bats] if there were, because two of the main things in this world he cannot deal with are spiders and bats! Needless to say, we left a comment on the post-tour evaluation/guest registry emphasizing (hopefully, not so tactfully it will be overlooked) that "Bats Are Our Friends!"

Next on the docket was a pilgrimage to the Mammoth Cave gift shop and visitor's

center. We arrived with a thunderstorm and waited out the downpour in the south parking lot where we gear-up during restoration camp. Once the rain let up and we finally made it inside, we both decided this stop would be very brief as it was a total zoo there. The parking lot was fuller than we'd ever seen it and I don't think anyone could have been in the cave since they all seemed to be crammed into the gift shop, visitor's center, snack bar and wherever else we tried to walk. So... we bolted, like a bat out of... a cave!

We worked our way back to Horse Cave the back way, via Flint Ridge Road and Highway 474, making a stop at the Mammoth Cave Church and Floyd Collins' grave on the way. After a brief rest, Saturday evening's entertainment was a play at the Horse Cave Theatre. The theatre is right behind Hidden River Cave and features a professional acting company and a wide range of comedy, drama, classics and original Kentucky plays each season. Appropriately enough, the play we saw, "Black Comedy", fit our weekend theme of "sort-of caving," since part of it took place in complete darkness—and wouldn't you know, we both left our light sources back at the hotel.

We headed north on I-65 first thing Sunday morning and, somewhat on a whim, stopped at Falls of the Ohio State Park, just across the Ohio River in Indiana. This turned out to be a pretty fascinating stop. The park is fairly new (established in 1990) and is famous for its Devonian



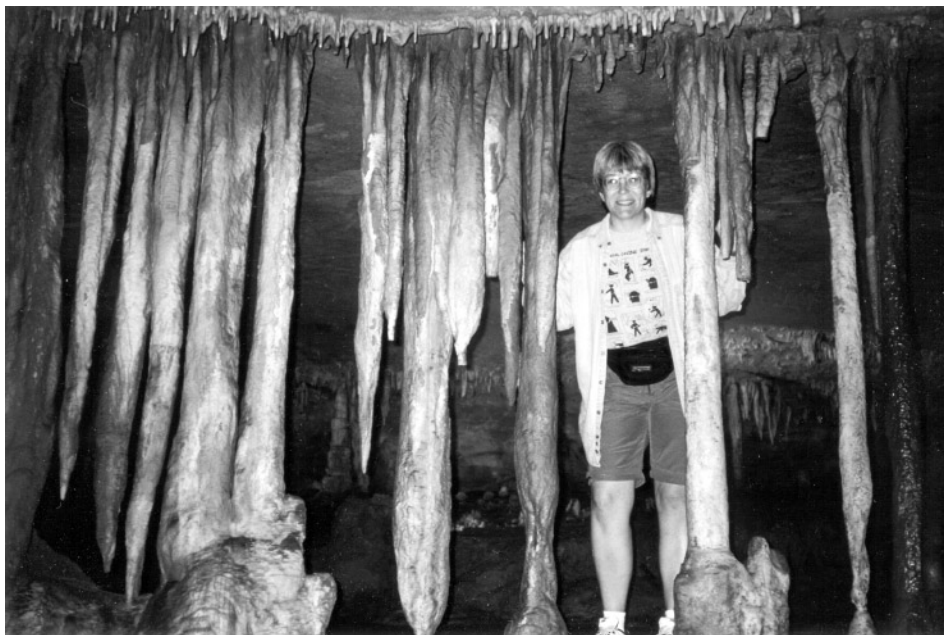
Beth and Julie tour Diamond Caverns, KY. Photo by Beth Reinke

fossil beds. Since the Interpretive Center did not open until 1:00 pm, we spent over an hour wandering along the waterfront cliffs uncovering all kinds of cool fossils—which Julie will begin studying in earnest this fall when she begins her Geology curriculum at ISU. Having been fully occupied and fascinated with our finds while browsing the waterfront, we were astounded to find out that the park's primary fossil beds were actually under tens of feet of water! The guy manning the museum ticket booth said he had lived in the area over 50 years and that this was the highest he had ever seen the water at this time of year. So, it looks

like we will have to stop by again when the "real" fossil beds are actually visible—we should really see some super-cool stuff then!

Marengo Cave in southern Indiana was our next destination. We figured we could fit in a "really quick" tour before working our way back north to Champaign... [fade-in theme music from Gilligan's Island]...

As we walked up to the ticket counter, the attendant, observing our attire (Julie sporting one of our new Grotto t-shirts and me illustrating the universal caving symbols), exclaimed, "Now here are some real cavers!" (He obviously wasn't aware of our weekend agenda.) Anyhow, we chatted a bit about caving, our grotto, our involvement with Mammoth restoration camp, and etc. and were opening our wallets to sign on for the "Dripstone Trail" tour, when the manager shook us off and handed us complimentary tickets for the tour. A young, but very knowledgeable guide lead us on a one mile trek through some really nicely decorated cave—soda straws, stalactites, totem pole stalagmites, columns, rim stone dams, draperies, and etc. The guide shared some unique observations about the history of the cave, the formations and what the local folk have named some of the formations. The tour also has a mud-covered "Penny Ceiling" where tourists are encouraged to toss coins up on the ceiling to see if they'll stick. The trip ended at "Mirror Lake" (artificially induced by some pumping and damming,



Beth in "Cave Jail" in Marengo Cave, IN. Photo by Julie Angel.

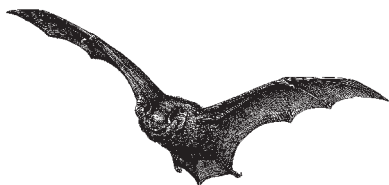
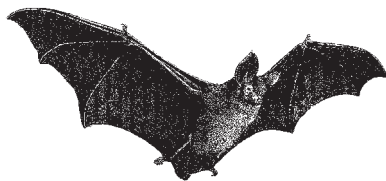
but still pretty darn cool).

Upon returning to the gift shop, we sought out the manager, extolled about the cave formations, complimented the guide, and thanked him again for the tour. He proceeded to ask if we wanted to see the other part of the cave too and promptly handed me two tickets for their “Crystal Palace” tour. So much for a “really quick” trip to Marengo Cave! This tour was a bit shorter, but still very scenic—huge flowstone deposits, pillars and a glimpse of the natural entrance. We also passed a crawlway leading to a still-being-explored third level of the cave. We got back to the gift shop just before closing time and each made purchases to help show our appreciation for the V.I.P. treatment.

Julie & Beth’s main tip from the weekend: Always wear your NNG or other caving shirt when visiting a commercial cave—you just might get celebrity treatment (deserved or not).

We left Marengo just before 6:00 pm and took the scenic back roads toward home. We made pretty good time and successfully dodged several thunderstorms, but our arrival in Champaign was delayed a bit by crowds slightly different than what we encountered at Mammoth. When we finally met up with I-74 at Covington, IN, we found ourselves in the middle of a construction-induced traffic jam, surrounded by pickups, SUVs, vans and RVs all plastered with NASCAR stickers—the remnant attendees of Sunday’s Brickyard 400 in Indianapolis. I did my best to blend in, not wanting my driving to stand out amongst such skilled roadsters. We finally rolled into Champaign just after 11:00 Sunday night.

All in all, it was a great, albeit a bit wimpy, caving weekend. Perhaps next time I’ll actually pack more caving gear than my mini-maglite and wintergreen



Pautler Cave Survey Trip

By *Bill Morrow*

Ralph Sawyer and I met up in Springfield at 6:30 in the morning on July 13, 2003, and started trekking down to Waterloo, IL, where we were to meet Don Coons, Barb Capocy, and Don Kerouac at the Super-8 Motel. After a relaxing time with a few cups of coffee in the Super-8 “kitchen”, we headed over to Pautler Cave. Our goal was to learn basic tape and compass techniques, and then survey a section of Pautler Cave. Pautler Cave has been acquired by the Karst Conservancy of Illinois (<http://www.caveresource.com/kci>), and a good percentage of the mortgage has been paid down, thanks to some generous contributors (one of whom we were surveying with).

After Don Coons had shown us the general property boundaries (and finding out that if poison ivy was a cash crop, the KCI would be acquiring their tenth cave by now), we suited up and ambled down to the entrance. The entrance to the cave had been bulldozed shut by the previous farmer who owned the land, and evidence of it was everywhere—large trees strewn at haphazard angles in the entrance, with a cleared area, where a heavy gate seemed to be permanently affixed to the side of the limestone walls.

Don Coons then held out the key to the cave and said with a slight smirk, “Go ahead, open the gate.” After scratching our heads, banging our heads, and then, finally, using our heads, we figured out how the entrance could be opened. The person who dreamed up this simple, but extremely deceptive, method of gating a cave is probably making millions selling nail puzzles at Cracker Barrel. The method camouflages the lock and the area where gates and bars are actually mobile.

Satisfying ourselves with some above ground practice foreshots and backshots with our Suunto compasses and tapes, we then went into the cave. Barb decided to see some friends in the area as Don C., Don K., Ralph, and I crawled in and got about our work. The section that we surveyed was probably the muddiest section of the cave. We literally would sink in up to our knees in mud, taking long periods of time between each step. This seemed to go on for miles, although at most it was a couple hundred feet. What made matters even more interesting was setting up a shot or mark by the mud and waiting while the

shot was made, all the time feeling yourself slowly sink deeper and deeper until you were almost immobile. Ralph, Don K., and I traded various surveying positions while Don Coons took notes and drew the area. We made very slow headway, earning each surveyed foot.

We finally made our way through the muddy crawl section and entered a nice borehole area of cave. We realized how much faster it could be when you can stand up and are not in a constant battle to keep your compasses clean and out of the mud. Unfortunately we had spent so much time in the muddy area that it was time to head back out. We did proceed a short way down the borehole section and found a beautiful multi-tiered rimstone dam structure (along with a live snake that seemed to have washed in). After taking pictures of the dam (and the snake) and staging some more shots—using slave flashes—on the way out, we emerged in the very late afternoon to find Barb waiting at the entrance in the hot, humid, mosquito-laced air.

It was a great learning experience. I found that running a cave survey is not at all like running an above ground survey, where you have a nice steady transit and well marked turning points. Cave surveying definitely takes a bit more ‘seat of the pants’ improvisation, finding good marking points, where the best line of site will be in a twisting cave, keeping your equipment clean in lousy conditions, and etc. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It will be interesting to hear what the next survey team finds on their trip.



**INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY
BUYS WAYNE'S LOST CAVE**

Keith Dunlap

Dear IKC member,

We wanted you to be the first to know....

This morning (6/2) our formal offer to purchase the entrance to Wayne's Cave was accepted. While there are still a few hoops to jump through, we are confident the deal will close, likely by the end of the month.

Waynes Cave has been under IKC stewardship since 1987. It is one of Indiana's "classic" caves and has been on our acquisition list for a number of years. In addition to the cave entrance, the IKC will be acquiring 20 acres of mostly wooded land. This will provide an area for off-road parking (a serious limitation in the past) and perhaps opportunities for primitive camping, hiking, and other recreational opportunities. The acreage overlies a significant portion of the cave which will protect the cave from inappropriate surface development. An addition 12 acres is also available to acquire at a later date.

Because of the expanding Bloomington real estate market, this area has experienced significant development pressures. This was an expensive piece of property and likely was our last chance to acquire the property to protect the cave, maintain access, and demonstrate proper stewardship for the land above it. We hope you will support our decision to acquire this cave property -- a donation solicitation letter will be sent in the near future, once we are positive the acquisition will be completed.

Sincerely for the Board,
Keith Dunlap

Update on The NSS Library Issue

Pat Kambesis (Cave City, Kentucky)

pnkambesis@juno.com

As many of you are already aware, the Friends of the Library (FOL) have been developing a website which will provide an in-depth look at the NSS Library Issue. This will enable everyone to gain overall insight of the Issue. We have direct links to the many facts and documentation involved and this should clear up or prevent incorrect or speculative information that has previously surrounded the Issue. We hope this makes it easier for anyone to seek out and research the Issue fully. Please see the following link:

<http://www.cavebooks.com/fol/>

Should you have questions or need more information please feel free to ask any members of the FOL or any of the NSS Officers or Board of Governors on the fol-nss yahoo egrouop at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nss-fol>

You can also contact your Board of Governor representative directly at:

<http://www.caves.org/nss-business/bog/table-4d.html#Directors>

If you have any questions or comments concerning NCKRI please direct those to the Director, Dr. Louise D. Hose at:

lhose@cemrc.org

Please feel free to distribute this message in its entirety to your fellow grotto members, and appropriate caving related list serves, egrouops or printed materials.

Thanks,
Pat Kambesis and Sharon Faulkner
Friends of the Library

