

TKC

UPDATE

A MEMO FROM THE INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY
NOVEMBER 1986



INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY

The Indiana Karst Conservancy, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana.

The purpose of the Conservancy is to acquire, manage, and protect the caves and related karst features of Indiana and other areas of the world for future study and recreation. The Conservancy will also promote conservation education about, and environmentally compatible use of karst areas.

Organization for 1986:

President--William L. Wilson (812) 299-5808	Director--Keith Dunlap (317) 291-3845
Secretary--Tom Rea (317) 839-2100	Director--Glenn Lemasters (812) 378-2008
Treasurer--Cindy Riley (317) 634-3837	

Committees for 1986:

Membership-----	Cindy Riley	(317) 634-3837
Public Relations-----	Dave Haun	(317) 784-2573
Cave Acquisition and Maintenance-----	Bill Wilson	(812) 299-5808
Fund Raising-----	Cindy Riley	(317) 634-3837
Scientific-----	Bill Wilson	(812) 299-5808
Educational Program Development-----	vacant	
Resource Inventories-----	Jim Wolford	(317) 259-1088

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

December 10	<u>General Meeting</u> , at the World War Memorial Building in Indianapolis, at 7:30 pm. Please come and voice your views.
December 20	<u>Gory Hole Trip</u> , meeting spot will be Mcdonalds in Bloomington, right off new 37, at 8:30 am. Please call, (before Dec. 10th), Dave Haun (317 784-2573) if you are planning to attend, as trip might be cancelled because of attendance.

Please call any officer or director for more details about these events.

For more information on the INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY write to:
Cindy Riley
P.O. Box 461
Plainfield, IN 46168

The IKC UPDATE is published to keep the membership in touch with the Board of Directors and informed on current projects and happenings.

THE COVER: Reprinted from Vol. 25, No. 10
The Cascade Caver

From the President:

The open letter of September 11, 1986, from some cavers of the Bloomington area, to members of the IKC, shows how difficult it is to obtain agreement among cavers about how to protect and conserve caves. The concerns expressed in the letter need to be addressed clearly and without emotional ire in order to promote cooperation within the Indiana caving community. I am confident that if we exchange information about our conservation goals, then we will find that we are closer to agreement than we thought.

In the first year of its existence the Conservancy has acted to protect the longest and best decorated cave in Monroe County; to safeguard people from the pit with the worst accident record in Indiana; and initiated the first bat conservation project undertaken by Indiana cavers. To accomplish these activities the Conservancy raised \$1,500 dollars of financial aid from its members, some grottos in Indiana, the National Speleological Society, and the Richmond Area Speleological Society. Hundreds of man-hours were contributed by dozens of cavers to protect a few of Indiana's fine caves. Landowners have happily signed leases that give cavers the right and the obligation to protect and preserve miles of cave in a natural condition. I think it is clear that the IKC has stepped-in to fill a gigantic cave conservation need.

So why do some cavers oppose the Conservancy? First, the Conservancy has chosen to manage and protect some caves by restricting access through the use of gates. It was thought that gates were the only effective means of filtering out the kind of people who trash caves. Controlling access to caves, by any means, causes someone's freedom to be compromised. Rules, regulations and bureaucracy are annoying to all of us. But if thoughtless people are destroying caves, then it is the freedom of all cavers that is being destroyed. I hope that it is worth making a telephone call or writing a letter in exchange for having a beautiful, undamaged cave to visit. The IKC intends to stand between the vandals and as many of the caves in Indiana as possible. This is a meritorious goal that all cavers should support.

More specifically, some cavers feel that access to sacrificial caves in the Garrison Chapel area should not be restricted because unaffiliated cavers must have some place to go. The IKC has obtained leases on all or part of four caves, but hasn't closed them to anyone but vandals. Unaffiliated cavers can go caving in them after they agree not to disturb the cave features.

The implication that the IKC has placed gates on a few heavily trafficked caves to stop visitation by unaffiliated cavers is totally incorrect. In fact, unaffiliated cavers have been making trips into Wayne's Cave almost every weekend since it was gated. Only now, they feel like they are privileged to get to go into the cave, and they do not go equipped with cases of beer and cans of spray paint. The Conservancy, with the help from NSS members, has turned a trashed cave into a controlled cave, in which neophytes learn to appreciate and respect the cave environment. Always support and encourage this kind of soft-impact caving.

(Pres. cont.)

The fact that large numbers of unaffiliated cavers are still visiting caves managed by the IKC, effectively negates the main argument contained in the letter of September 11th. The willingness of many unaffiliated cavers to arrange access to Wayne's Cave shows that diversion of neophytes to other caves has been minimal.

It hasn't been easy to maintain the gates on Wayne's and Shaft caves. Since August 1st, the gate on Shaft Cave has been vandalized seven times. The lock has been broken, the bars have been sawed off, and even when the gate was removed for repairs, the frame was sawed on. Wayne's Cave has suffered similar abuse. It is clear that whoever is doing the vandalism, is doing it because they oppose the gate concept, not because they want access. I can only conclude that one or two NSS members are willing to trespass and destroy private property in order to keep caves open to vandals. The NSS provides a \$500 reward to people who provide information that leads to the conviction of cave vandals, and the owner of Shaft has promised to prosecute anyone who is caught breaking into the cave.

Originally the Board of Directors of the IKC decided not to publicize the vandalism fearing that it would only suit the vandals purpose. We hoped that locals, or unaffiliated cavers were breaking into the gates, but that is apparently not the case. I hope that the information presented in this letter will convince the gate vandals that their destructive activities are unnecessary.

A small group of cavers may feel upset about having to ask permission to go into a cave which for many years had unrestricted access. Increasing visitation and unacceptable levels of damage and pollution make controlled access desirable. Times are changing and cavers should change with them. No one should feel put-off about helping conserve caves. Please remember that gates were placed on some caves only to filter-out vandals and protect unprepared visitors from cave hazards. Any group that wants to develop a program, through which they can have direct access, is welcomed to present their plan to the IKC Board of Directors. Access to the caves managed by the IKC is available, which is more than can be said for some caves which have been dynamited or commercialized by certain other cavers.

Cavers were given a chance to voice their opinion about the principles of the Conservancy before it was formed. In December of 1985, I wrote an open letter describing the proposed leasing of some caves in the Garrison Chapel area, and invited comments from cavers. I sent the letter to 22 grottos in Indiana and surrounding states including the BIG. The letter was printed in the CIG Newsletter. In return I received only two letters that said, "why bother?" The fact that no one from the BIG responded to the initial inquiry led me to believe that they did not oppose the Conservancy. In light of recent developments it seems that the corresponding secretary of the BIG has its own, internal, communication problems. I feel that I made an honest effort to communicate with cavers interested in the Indiana karst. Now a commitment has been made to certain landowners to help them protect their caves. If some BIG members make it impossible to fulfill this commitment, then the caves may be closed permanently.

(Pres. cont.)

Also, as a result of opposing the private cave owner's wishes, the BIG could lose all credibility as a responsible caving club.

People who promote sacrificial caving believe that if neophytes are allowed to destroy a few caves then they won't bother other caves. This is an impoverished philosophy that hasn't worked. Sacrificial caving, as practiced in Indiana, not only doesn't save caves - it actually creates vandals by instilling the misconception that littering, graffiti and breaking formations are all part of caving. Now the sacrificed cave status is spreading to caves outside the Garrison Chapel area, such as Sullivan's and Doghill-Donnehue. If cavers don't take control of the situation, then further spoiling of Indiana caves is sure to occur.

Another thing that bothers me about the sacrificial cave concept is how vague it is. Who is on the sacrificial cave committee? Which caves are to be sacrificed? What criteria are to be used to decide which caves should be sacrificed? Does a cave sacrificer have the right to sacrifice caves on other people's property? No one has a sacrificial cave plan. Do you think Wayne's should be sacrificed? I beg to differ. Wayne's is the second longest cave in Indiana, north of Bedford. It has more levels, that record the changes in cavernous drainage through geologic time, than any other cave in Indiana. It has formations in Helictite Holler and RPI Discovery that are among the best in Indiana. It is a fun and physically challenging cave. Don't sacrifice it!

I could write pages about sacrificial caving, but the point to be made here is that the IKC has gone one step beyond sacrificial caving. Through non-profit corporations like the Conservancy, cavers can establish controlled-access caves that provide neophytes with both a place to go caving and some conservation training. Sacrificial caving is a non-management, apathetic cop-out that essentially ignores conservation training. Some cavers may continue to sacrifice and spoil their caves, then please help the Conservancy educate neophytes about the value of cave resources through a controlled-access, soft-impact caving program in selected caves. Sacrificial caving is, thankfully, obsolete.

The attention of the IKC is by no means directed exclusively toward the Garrison Chapel area - the glaring problems there simply demanded immediate attention. The management of the Conservancy would like to support cave conservation activities in other areas and would especially like to arrange regular access for organized cavers to owner-closed caves such as Gory Hole. Our members are working on several such possibilities and will describe them in newsletter articles in the near future. A major benefit of a non-profit organization such as the Conservancy is that with proper management nearly all caving trips become tax deductible business expenses. A resource inventory program was recently implemented to allow members to take advantage of this benefit.

(Pres. cont.)

The open letter of September 11th suggested sealing the culvert entrance of Donnehue Cave as an example of the type of activity in which the IKC would be involved. This issue was previously discussed among the directors of the Conservancy. If any members of the BIG are willing to undertake this task, then the Conservancy is ready to stand behind them 100 percent. We know that welding the grate will be a continuous on-going project, because people will break-in, but we are ready to commit our financial and personnel resources to protecting Donnehue's Cave which is rapidly slipping onto the sacrificed list.

Cave conservation is a tough problem. It takes time, money, and lots of work to make it happen, but how will we endure the criticism of future generations if we allow the beauty and wonder of caves to be destroyed? I would rather error on the side of conservation than on the side vandalism.

I have found it necessary to move to Florida to take advantage of a fantastic opportunity to work as a geologist for the Sinkhole Research Institute at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Nonetheless, I am still committed to protecting caves in my home state of Indiana. Next March the IKC will need a new president, directors, and members who are willing to contribute their time and resources. All members of the caving community are welcomed to join the Conservancy and contribute to shaping a future in which the caves of Indiana will be protected for enjoyment by future generations.

Good caving,

Bill

Think about it

Reflections
by David L. Weyrick

When we first started caving
It was all done for fun,
The spirit of adventure
led us further and further on.

Eagerly, we crawled forward
Advancing from hall to room,
Simply enjoying each discovery
as perceived through the gloom.

We never worried about surveys,
or 'Who else is gonna find it?',
It wasn't part of a contest
We did it because we liked it.

Now everything is so political,
Trips are made because its a must,
Friendships become second place,
Its become a matter of trust.

Its now Grotto vs Grotto
Each against the other,
We race to possess our caves
Before its their's to discover.

Yes, caving times are changing,
To a totally different way,
Lets Remember:

Everyone begins as a novice,
Lets THINK!
Before we gate this cave.

Organized caving is essential,
But some need to learn how to use it
Cavers are supposed to work together
And be careful not to abuse it.

So lets all remember
As we prepare for our next meeting,
The reason we cave is for fellowship
Not for glory: thats too misleading.

In the Mail Bag

Most members of the IKC probably received an open letter from Bloomington area cavers in September. The following is a reprint, word for word.

An open letter to members of the Indiana Karst Conservancy.

The IKC has chosen in it's name the term Karst which refers to features on the surface of the earth that indicate a presence, or past presence, of underground water flow through solution cavities. Some Karst Features are sinkholes, blind valleys, sinking streams, and cave entrances. Evidently, from the name of your organization, its existance is for the purpose of conserving features on the surface of the ground that reflect the existance of caves.

We the undersigned believe that the Indiana Karst Conservancy has chosen an erroneous path in its effort to gate the most heavily travelled caves in the state of Indiana. We believe the conservation of cave resources would best be served by effort in other directions. For example, sealing of the culvert entrance of Donnehue Cave to keep vandals out (and permit necessary drainage); yet cavers could use the other entrances. Another direction could be a program that discourages caving by presenting the hazardous, slimy, and sweaty aspects of caves, while downplaying courageous adventure. We also believe that cave conservation would be better served if resources of the IKC were not being misspent at the Garrison Chapel area caves that certain of the IKC leaders have an emotional attachment to.

Signed by cavers of the Bloomington area.

Tom Bertdacini David Black Anmar ? Charles Snyder

Christiana Lingford Don Paquette Jo Ellen Kimmel Karl Pitts

Denise Pitts Sam Frushour Randy Jackson Philys Macey

Holly Cook Kevin Komisarik Richard Blenz Mike Miessen G. Conner

(The names signed were not very readable, apologies to those names that were misspelled.)

In rebuttal to this letter, three letters from the IKC membership have been sent to everyone who signed the letter and to the BIG. Bill Wilson sent the letter that is on page 2 of this Update. The other two letters were from Dave Haun and Keith Dunlap, they are as follows:

An open letter to members of the Bloomington area cavers:

This letter might or might not reflect the feelings or views of the IKC, but do represent mine, a caver that caves in Indiana and in the Bloomington area.

The term Karst, in the name Indiana Karst Conservancy, isn't "evidently" the sole purpose of conserving surface features. This is a meaningless criticism that does not effect the inner workings of an organization. Why be bogged down by a name?

(Letter cont)

It is the contents within the organization that you should carefully examine, not the name. The name could be the Mud Savers of Indiana. What is the big deal?

Your second paragraph states that "the IKC has chosen an erroneous path in its effort to gate the most heavily travelled caves in the state of Indiana." The IKC efforts are not to gate every cave as some cavers would lead you to believe. In an effort to help curb vandalism in two caves in the Garrison Chapel Valley area, the IKC went to two landowners and got their feedback about caves and caving. One cave was Wayne's and the owner did not want to be bothered by cavers and did not want all the people wandering freely around on their property. The other cave the IKC wanted to protect was Grotto Cave, because the Bats. It just so happens that the person that owns Grotto owns Shaft Cave and Coons Cave. That landowner was already getting bids for putting up fencing around the whole property and posting no trespassing signs. He was then going to physically close the caves if this did not stop the trespassing on his property. The IKC offered both of these landowners management of their caves, land features that were nuisances to them.

As a acting landowner, the IKC has dealt with cave vandalism in Wayne's Cave as effectively as it could, short of having one person living in the cave year around to deter vandalism and trashing out the cave. I am personally opposed to gating of caves, but what other answer is there at this time in 1986? Surely you would agree that Wayne's is worth protecting. I think all caves are worth protecting, mainly because I want to cave in Indiana over the next twenty years or more. Landowners are closing cave. Yes, There is still that chance of sneaking into a closed cave, but it isn't always worth the trouble.

I should hope you would agree that the fencing around Grotto Cave was a wise choice. It is a bat hibernaculum and is closed, not by the IKC, but by the state of Indiana and the Federal government, because of the endangered species of bats. The cave is only closed to all cavers during a certain time a year. What is this? Just a little inconvenience. Grotto Cave doesn't have just on bat in it, it has thousands. I think it is worth the trouble and money. Your letter does not say anything about this cave. Could it be a wise choice? A wise choice form the group your so eager to hate?

How many times a year have you personally been called out on a cave rescue to Shaft Cave? How many time so you think you will be called out now that it doesn't have free access to novices? I should think that the NCRC, the BIG, and the CIG personnel should be happy about this. Not because it has been gated, but because of the reduced number of novice cavers that are not properly trained to do the pit and end up getting hurt.

You have also stated that a better effort of the IKC would be to seal the culvert entrance to Donnehue Cave. Yes I agree, and the IKC is already trying to do just that. The State of Indiana has to be in on the decision making of this idea. There aren't too many ways around that.

I think the IKC should be bolder and get more input from cavers and keep in better touch with the caving community. This is one of the many complaints that the IKC is currently trying to work out.

(Letter cont.)

One of the many purposes of the IKC is to try to obtain permission to get cavers into closed caves. WE ARE DOING THIS! We have permission to go into Shiloh Cave in Lawrence County. We are in the process of ironing out differences of opinions with the landowner of Gory Hole, the deepest vertical drop in Indiana to date. Both of these projects have been pursued long before the leases to Wayne's and Shaft were obtained. We are getting caves opened back up.

Your letter finally ends with personal gripe between persons that dislike certain individuals. "We believe that cave conservation would be better served if resources of the IKC were not being misspent at the Garrison Chapel area caves that certain of the IKC leaders have an emotional attachment to." From this sentence I read that the writer of this letter is condemning IKC leaders to an emotional attachment of the Garrison Chapel area. As one of the those original leaders that helped get the IKC moving and was around when decisions were made to lease some property in the Garrison Chapel area, I take offense to this accusation. First of all, the writer of this letter does not know me personally and has never been caving with me, so how does he know my feelings about this caving area?

Secondly, "...conservation would be better served if resources of the IKC were not being misspent..." Again, are thousands of endangered bats a waste of money? We are not talking Trout Cave and one bat. We are talking thousands. Real cavers along with novices were going into this cave even when it was suppose to be closed for hibernation.

I hate to see a caving community so cut up into different cliques, especially in the same State. With the many backgrounds that cavers have, personality conflicts will always arise and be present. I don't have a solution to this or how to effectively control cave vandalism. But at least I'm trying to do something. Maybe like me, your tired of hearing from landowners about how "cavers" are pissing them off and how the landowners are closing their caves. Maybe like me your tired of the 'Once a year cavers' that trash out your favorite cave or write their name on the best formation they can find! Instead of sitting back and letting others dictate how you should feel or how hat to hate, why not get involved in what is taking place. I am not making a pitch for the IKC. Whether you join the IKC or some other organization, the end product is what I'm making the pitch for. We cavers need to watch out for ourselves and not let the 'once a year cavers' and the trash monger take our prize possession-caving, along with landowners, to the dumps and get caves closed. Each one of us has one thing in common and that is caves and caving.

Dave Haun

R. Keith Dunlap
7823 Hunters Path
Indianapolis, IN 46214
(317) 291-3845
27 October 1986

To whom it may concern:

This letter is in response to the open letter to Indiana Karst Conservancy members signed by several members of the Bloomington Indiana Grotto. As a member and director of the IKC, I felt it was necessary to respond in hopes of addressing some of the concerns and comments and to explain some apparent misunderstandings. However, this letter is strictly my personal views, and should not be construed as any official response of the IKC.

Let me start by saying that the Indiana Karst Conservancy is a young organization, and as such, can be subject justifiably to criticism. I will be the first to admit that some of our actions have been controversial. We do not profess to know all the answers on the best way to help protect caves, but it is clearly evident to us that the previous attitude of ignoring the problem is totally unacceptable. We have received a lot of positive support from cavers that are glad to see organized conservation projects being initiated, but we also realize that some of the actions that we have undertaken have been unpopular with other cavers. The fundamental problem comes from the fact that all conservation activities require giving up something to gain something. In our case, in order to conserve caves, it is sometimes necessary to restrict the responsible majority for the sake of the irresponsible minority. The key to success is to properly balance the inconveniences created with the benefits derived. This balance is by no means clear cut and is often determined only with time and experience. We know we may have some problems in this area and we are trying to rectify them. We have learned a lot over the past year and we will continue to expand our knowledge as our organization matures. For this reason, the IKC encourages constructive criticism (the key word is constructive!). We are fully aware that the success and survival of the IKC is ultimately dependent upon its acceptance among the majority of the organized cavers of Indiana and we are trying to meet these needs. But we are also realistic enough to know that there will be some individuals that will always be critical of our methods no matter what we do, so our only response in that situation is that we can't please everyone.

In response to the first paragraph of your letter questioning our name, we chose the word "karst" over "cave" because we felt the broader term better exemplified our range of interests. To limit ourselves strictly to the underground passages is rather narrow minded, for caves are not features independent nor isolated from events that occur on the surface. The IKC is concerned with the conservation and management of all karst features (sinkholes, sinking streams, karst windows, etc.) that ultimately influence caves. An example of our "broader scope" is the clean up at Wayne's Cave. We initially concentrated on cleaning up the cave, but we also put considerable effort into cleaning up the sinkhole adjacent to the entrance. Not only is the entrance area much more aesthetically pleasing now, but the pollution of the cave should be greatly reduced in the future because of the removal of many tons of trash from the sinkhole that was leaching into the hydrological system.

As for your second paragraph, let me start by saying we appreciate your suggestions of, and support for the closing of the culvert entrance to Donnehue Cave to limit vandalism. This idea has been suggested previously and

is on our priority list of projects. However, the entrance is the property of the Indiana Department of Transportation, and thus far we have yet to successfully tackle the channels necessary to properly accomplish this task. As for your suggestion for a program to discourage caving; we do not want to discourage caving, we only want to discourage individuals that cave improperly. We do have plans for several education programs, our problem is finding volunteers that are willing to implement and develop them. Perhaps someone from the BIG would like to volunteer.

Now to address the concerns on the gating of Wayne's and Shaft Caves (which seems to be the major subject of controversy). We do not dispute there are philosophical differences on the appropriateness of gating caves and we can sympathize with those that have difficulty with this idea. However, I fail to see the logic of your letter being critical of restricting access to one cave that was suffering greatly from vandalism (Wayne's) and yet at the same time suggest that access should be limited in a similar situation (Donnehue). I also question why the members of the Bloomington Indiana Grotto waited until now, nearly six months after the installation of the two gates to formally express their complaints. It was nearly a year ago that letters were sent to all grottos in the five state area soliciting comments on the proposed idea of gating these two caves. To my knowledge there were no formal replies received that were against this action. And to date, I have not heard of, nor seen any negative impacts on these or other caves in the area for us to reverse our actions.

As to the concerns on the spending (or misspending) of the IKC funds in the Garrison Chapel area and the suggestion that these resources would be better utilized somewhere else; I can only reply by asking the question of where better to spend our fund than on the most abused caves in Indiana? I would also like to state that apparently other cavers and organizations besides the IKC feel that the Garrison Chapel caves are worth investing in, as over 50% of our funding has come in the form of donations and grants, with the largest contributor being the NSS.

To be more specific, the IKC originally spent approximately \$125 on materials to install the gate at Wayne's. This seems very inexpensive to me to help save one of the best caves in the Bloomington area from further needless destruction. The gate at Shaft cost a similar amount and was funded totally by a NSS grant. Again this seems very inexpensive to help prevent a serious accident by an improperly equipped and inexperienced neophyte caver. And even if you don't care about the poor sucker that splatters himself on the bottom of the entrance pit, there is the inconvenience and expense of a rescue (or body recovery), costing many times the preventive investment that was made. Furthermore, how do you begin to assess the damage that the negative publicity of a major cave accident can have on land owners? An example is the closing of Eller's after a minor accident. These are not short lived effects either as I still occasionally hear of landowners denying permission to enter their cave because they still remember the deaths in Show Farm Cave, an accident that occurred more than twenty-five years ago. Do you want to take the risk of having more caves unnecessarily closed because of an accident that could have been easily prevented?

The largest IKC project to date has been the erection of a fence around Grotto Cave to protect thousands of hibernating bats, including over 4200 endangered Indiana Bats. The IKC spent approximately \$1150 (of which only \$450 came from the IKC general fund, the remainder was funded as follows: \$200 from a special fund raising raffle at Capers, \$100 from a donation from the Mid-Hoosier

Grotto, \$150 from the NSS, and \$250 from RASS). Relative to similar bat protection projects (e.g. Trout Rocks, Hubbards), I think the IKC members received a real bargain for the money that was spent and the number of bats involved. The IKC directors have been very responsible with the Conservancy's money and have worked extremely hard in arranging funding from other sources!

To date, the only money and labor spent needlessly has been on gate maintenance because of repeated vandalism at Shaft and Wayne's (a total of 14 instances on the two gates) by misguided individuals that think they are proving some meaningless point. It is very obvious that this vandalism is not done to gain entry to the cave, only to damage the gates themselves (in every conceivable way possible and with considerable effort and persistence on the part of the perpetrators). It is extremely sad that the evidence implicates organized cavers doing the damage. I wonder if they realize the seriousness of the crimes they are committing and the consequences if caught?

As you can see from the previous discussion, the actual monetary investments (approx. \$1500) made in the Garrison Chapel area have not been exorbitant. The major investment, however, has come from the members (and others) that have contributed a great deal of their time into these projects. In the past year, cavers have expended over 1000 manhours of labor on IKC conservation projects (mostly in the Garrison Chapel area). Why would our members "spend" (or "mis-spend") their time by volunteering to help if they did not think these projects were worthwhile? The IKC directors did not force members to work on these projects, the members worked on these projects because they care! The only functions that directors serve are to coordinate the activities and to take care of the corporate "paper work". It is the membership that ultimately steers the Conservancy and they decide the projects to undertake and the resources to be spent.

I assume your comment about certain IKC leaders having emotional attachments to the Garrison Chapel caves refers to Bill Wilson and Tom Rea. I see nothing wrong with Bill taking a special interest in the caves that he spent a year and a half studying for a Masters thesis (perhaps if some of the BIG cavers would spend more time in the Garrison Chapel area, it would become apparent to them that these caves are worth protecting), nor Tom for wanting to protect a cave that has been a personal favorite of his for a long time. This is exactly the type of personal devotion and dedication that is necessary to be successful in the long term! Many others (myself included) also have a sentimental and emotional attachment for the Garrison Chapel caves because these were the caves that we "cut our teeth on" when we started caving. Perhaps this is why so many have shown support by volunteering to help. It is too bad that many Bloomington area cavers take these caves for granted, and do not feel this same "obligation" to give something back to the caves that have given so much to some of us.

Addressing the individual comments, I will start with the comment pertaining to our relations with other organized caving groups. Apparently BIG members have a misperception on this point because the BIG is the only caving organization that we seem to have a poor relationship with. Every other major grotto in Indiana (CIG, NIG, EMG, and Mid-Hoosier) have shown support and have members that are also IKC members. We have also received favorable recognition from national organizations such as the NSS, RASS, and ACCA. The problems that have evolved between the BIG and the IKC seems based on some misunderstandings and miscommunications caused primarily by personality conflicts between a couple of individuals from each group. I believe that other BIG members have been biased against the IKC without full knowledge of what our intentions are.

We are not out to gate every cave in Indiana as some would have you to believe. Our main purpose is to help protect the caves that need protection, and unfortunately in some cases a gate is the only effective means to do this. I think the members of the BIG would have a more informed opinion of the IKC if they would take the time to talk to an IKC member or director (feel free to contact me directly) or read our brochure and the IKC Updates that have been mailed in the past to the BIG (if you were unaware that the BIG received these mailings, see Dick Blenz).

For the comments of "good intention, poor methods" and "I agree with the ideals, but the methods are all wrong", I ask what alternative methods are there for effectively protecting a cave like Wayne's or preventing an accident in Shaft other than to gate the entrances. Again, we do not advocate a gate for every cave, but for some situations, it is the only viable means. The other alternative as we see it is to do nothing, and this in our view point is not acceptable. We would very much like to hear from anyone that has a better management plan.

I am not sure how to interpret the comment that a gate is a "no win situation". Using Wayne's as an example, it seems that we are winning the battle in protecting the cave from vandalism, for it has remained much cleaner after the cleanup than previous attempts (before the gate was installed) and we have reduced unnecessary traffic. We have received many positive comments from those that have visited Wayne's recently providing evidence that the gating of the entrance was not an inappropriate action. As far as the vandalism on a gate is concerned, I would much rather have damage occurring on a reparable, "expendable" structure than on the cave itself. A cave gate requires only materials, labor and patience to be maintained; the cave requires a minimum of eons to recover. As for Shaft, I would say we "win" a small victory every time the gate prevents an under-qualified neophyte from attempting the pit. Cave gating can be a "winning" conservation tool when there is the commitment to be persistent.

The comment about the "[IKC's] current practices ... are forcing nerds to find other caves to trash out" and Dick Blenz's comments are both related to the philosophy of "sacrificial cave". This philosophy has been debated for years and I do not want to elaborate on it here more than necessary, other than to present my personal observations on why this philosophy apparently doesn't work (at least as currently implemented). In theory, "sacrificial caves" are to serve the purpose of keeping the undesirables that go caving confined to, and preoccupied with a few caves which will spare and "protect" all the other caves from destruction. Dick Blenz has claimed to be the coiner and instigator of this philosophy (something I wouldn't be very proud to admit) and subjected Buckner to his experiment. It was an interesting experiment, but it is clear to me and others that it has not worked in practice for the following reasons:

- By allowing the type of vandalism and "trashing" that has occurred in a cave like Buckner, it is a clear signal to the neophyte cavers that it is acceptable to do whatever they please, whenever they please, where ever they please.
- It is a never ending battle. Giving up one cave will work for a while, but soon that cave is totally destroyed and to appease the vandals, another cave is "sacrificed". And another. And another, until we have given in to the point where there is nothing left. Why give up something without a fight when there is nothing gained in return?.

- Having the attitude of "people will go caving whether we like it or not" and there isn't anything we can do about it is not a justifiable reason to allow vandalism to go unchecked (only an apathetic excuse). It may be true that vandalism can not be completely stopped, but there are many ways to slow it down considerably, and the IKC intends to do this.
- Because access is so easy, it encourages people to go caving that wouldn't normally do so, or to go for the wrong reasons (e.g. to get drunk and party somewhere different). Even minimal access "inconveniences" would discourage 90% of the "undesirables" from going caving and yet still allow all those that want to go to do so.
- It teaches even conscientious novice cavers improper caving techniques. My best example of this is a caver friend (extremely conscientious) that had been to Buckner several times and was interested enough to come to a CIG meeting. On his first grotto trip, he was spotted dumping his carbide on the floor. When questioned, he stated that he just thought it was the proper thing to do because he had seen it done so many times before and did not realize it was wrong. This caver is very intelligent, and yet he was ignorant of proper caving methods because he had learned by observation.
- It conveys the wrong attitude towards, and respect for other caves and their owners. Because of the open access to caves like Buckner, some "cavers" think they can go to other caves and it is unnecessary to ask permission, nor do they know how to be discrete around landowners.
- Dick Blenz, as the cave owner of Buckner may have decided to "sacrifice" his cave, but who decided to "sacrifice" the other caves in the Garrison Chapel area? Were the other land owners consulted and permission granted? I think it is very commendable to "sacrifice" something that doesn't even belong to the proponent of his philosophy. It is even more commendable for those same proponents to complain when someone else, with the cave owners permission, tries to reverse this "sacrificial" status!
- If the proponents of "sacrificial" caves want to effectively keep the "nerd" cavers contained to "their" caves, then they had better be prepared to make long term commitments to keep these caves cleaned up. Time and time again, I have been asked by novice cavers where to go caving. When I suggest Buckner, the response is always the same, "I've been there and it is too trashed out, I want to go to some better caves". I contend it is not the IKC gates that are "forcing the nerds to find other caves to trash out", but the proponents of "sacrificial" caves that have not fulfilled their obligations by keeping the "sacrificial" caves hospitable.

Until I am presented with evidence that "sacrificial" caves reduce traffic and vandalism in other caves, and that gating caves have the opposite effect, I will totally condone the former and in certain situations be in favor of the latter. We have witnessed that "sacrificial" caves do not work, it is time to be open minded and try something else. At least if we are in error, we have not caused irrevocable damage.

The final comment pertains to cave owner relations. I agree that "caving in the USA is a result of good caver/landowner good faith relations". However, I bet every organized caver knows of a dozen or two caves that have been closed by landowners because the owner has been hassled one too many times. Further, most cavers probably know of many more landowners that have threatened to (or

have!) "blown" their cave shut because the cave is a nuisance and they are to the point of being fed up. The eroding land owner relationships are a major concern to all cavers. The statement that the "IKC is attempting to destroy" this relationship is totally false. The IKC is extremely proud of the good relationships it has established with the landowners we have worked with. In the case of the property that contains Shaft, Grotto, and Coon, the landowner was tired of the hassles and was preparing to fence his entire property and close all three caves. As a result of the IKC activities that have taken place over the last year, he now has a new positive impression of cavers, and we will now have continued access (pending on being able to maintain the gate on Shaft) to these three caves (plus Salamander which is not on his property but contains the "right of way"). Another example of good landowner relationships is with the "caretaker" of Shiloh Cave's church entrance. This summer, the cave was closed with the intent to keep everyone out. Because we had previously leased the quarry entrance and established a good rapport with that owner, we were also able to negotiate limited access to the preferred entrance. A final example is with the landowner of the Woodard entrance to Dunbar-Woodard cave in Clarksville, TN. While the IKC's only involvement in the cave is as legal lease holder (for the NIG which financed and installed a gate themselves and has total management responsibilities over it), the owner is extremely pleased with our willingness to accept the liability responsibilities and feels much more at ease because of it. Individual cavers have very little to offer cave owners, but the IKC has much and asks nothing in return except access to their caves. We are not destroying landowner relations, we are improving them!

Other projects that the IKC is currently involved in that may be of interest to cavers (and to show that we are not a cave gating club) are activities with two state organizations. We are currently in the preliminary stages of advising the State Parks Department on opening up their caves to limited permit caving (primarily in Spring Mill). We have also been solicited to help the DNR on other bat protection projects and hope someday to negotiate limited access to presently closed bat caves such as Twin Domes. We also have negotiated with the owner of Gory Hole for access, but we have yet to decide whether his terms are acceptable (more about this later). We are also working on plans for each grotto to have keys to some or all of the caves we manage to minimize the inconveniences for responsible cavers. This plan is currently being held up because of the gate vandalism being encountered (we are uncertain as to who is friend or foe among organized cavers).

I hope that this letter has been informative and has cleared up some of the misunderstandings that have developed between the BIG cavers and the IKC. I apologize for the length of the letter, but there were a number of comments that needed to be addressed. I hope that the differences in philosophy of the two organizations can be overcome and our relationship improved. We are all cavers and should be pulling together to help conserve caves, not bickering among ourselves while our caves are being destroyed.

I would be interested in any constructive comments that you may have to this letter. Thank you for your patience and considerations.

Sincerely



Keith Dunlap
NSS 19255

WHERE ARE WE AT NOW?

Aside from the political front, the IKC has been busy with several projects. These projects are what we are all about and the reports that follow are straight from the horses mouth.

GROTTO CAVE FUND-RAISER
by Keith Dunlap

As a means of supplementing the financing of the Grotto Cave fencing project, a raffle was promoted by the IKC at Cave Capers. The prize was a framed print of a pencil drawing of the "Barcardi Bat." This unbelievably detailed drawing was done by Ralph Rancourt, a father of a friend of mine. The original intention of this artwork was for my own personal enjoyment and possibly the cover of the CIG Newsletter. As it turned out, it was used on the cover of the Caper's Guidebook. Everyone that saw the original was impressed with the detail and felt it would make a good raffle item. I donated the cost of the printed enlargement and Kevin Bruno donated the oak frame. The raffle tickets were sold at registration and again "peddled" in the food line at the banquet. In all, 118 tickets were sold at one dollar each, all profit. The winner of the print was Jane Miller. After the raffle, several individuals wanted to buy copies, so one framed and four unframed copies have been sold for an additional profit of \$85. Thus slightly over \$200 has been raised from this very simple idea. If anyone else would like a print of the Barcardi Bat, contact me ASAP (this would make an excellent Christmas gift for the caver that has everything). Framed copies are \$50, unframed are \$25.

COON CAVE ACTIVITIES
by Keith Dunlap

The previous article, in the Update, outlined the basic management policy for Coon Cave, but it did not go into much detail on the implementation of the policy, nor recent activities that have taken place. Coon has a natural barrier, a twenty foot entrance pit, that (hopefully) limits visits to vertically prepared cavers. This barrier has in the past been circumvented by tree ladders. As a move to reduce traffic (especially during hibernation season), the IKC is determined to keep such ladders removed.

Early last spring, the Michigan Karst Conservancy contacted the IKC with the offer to help on a conservation project. We suggested that Coon was in need of a cleanup in the entrance area (the rest of the cave was in fair shape following a CIG cleanup in July of 1985), concentrating on removing the timber that had accumulated over the previous years of neglect. On May 17th, the MKC spent the day cutting up and removing most of the logs including the one used as a ladder.

This was effective until mid-summer when someone went to considerable effort to construct a new ladder complete with pre-cut two-by-four rungs. Because of the activities at Grotto (the fence construction), and Shaft (vandalism repairs), Coon was overlooked until the start of the hibernation season.

(Coon cont.)

On September 5th, I spent the afternoon removing the rungs from the ladder and posting signs (see the last page in the Update), around the entrance and along the trail. On the following Sunday, George Grutchen, Steve Reesman, Angie Manon, and myself rigged a haul line and removed all remaining logs from the entrance pit. We also posted additional signs higher on the trees to make them more difficult to remove.

A recent development (as of September 6th), that has mixed blessings is the logging taking place on the property containing Shaft, Grotto, and Coon. Typically logging really ecologically and aesthetically screws up the woods, but from preliminary observations, it appears they aren't doing too bad of a job (as logging goes). The positive side is that the foot trail to Coon has become lost in the maze of skidder trails. This should definitely cut down on the traffic until new trails are established (This is a personal conclusion based on the fact that four of us spent over an hour looking for the cave, with I having been to the cave twice the previous weekend. I finally had to return to the truck to get the topo location, after which it was found easily).

A second benefit to be derived from the logging is that the owner has stated that he intends to use the income from the logging to fence his property. This would considerably reduce the traffic to his three caves as well as cut off the main paths to Salamander Cave. The IKC fully expects to have continued access to the caves since we have established very good relations with the owner.

As with Grotto Cave, our main defense is that anyone caught violating the hibernaculum closure will be susceptible to prosecution. We hope the risk of getting caught is great enough to minimize traffic. As for visitation during the summer, we hope that the necessity of a rope will discourage the "party cavers" to keep out.

Coon Cave is also in need of a patron (responsibilities limited to checking the cave occasionally). Anyone interested should contact a director. The directors are listed on page 1 of the Update.

SHAFT CAVE by Scott Fee

On May 17 and 18th, a gate was placed on Shaft along with signs about the dangers of a vertical pit and who to contact to get permission.

A total of five persons have gone into Shaft since the gate, all the requests were from the signs posted at the pit.

On July 25th, the first act of vandalism occurred with the combination lock damaged so that it could not be used. The lock was replaced. On August 9th, someone started sawing on the gate bars and during the following week, both cross bars were sawed off completely, lock removed, door jam hammered down, and metal placed between door and the frame. On August 18th, Keith Dunlap and I removed the door for repairs. On August 24th, the door was replaced with special welding added to prevent future sawing.

(Shaft cont.)

On September 5th, the lock was broken off again and replaced. On September 13th, the lock was broken off and the lock bracket sawed off. On September 20th, the door was removed for repairs. Then on September 23rd, the door jam was broken and someone sawed into the hinge holes to prevent from the door being put back on.

As you can see, it has been a practical war with the artillery getting tougher at each point. The new door has a steel plate covering half the door and a steel box to house the lock to prevent damage. All gate repairs have taken about an overall time of 50 manhours in building and repairing, Keith Dunlap estimates.

A few conservation trips were made by Keith Dunlap, Pat Carmean, Pat Eudaly, and myself to try to restore the surrounding area to its natural state. A log hauling trip by Dave Smashey, Pat Carmean, and myself, using a tree tyrolean with a pulley, netted three +10-foot logs and three 8-foot logs from shaft. Hopefully the November 1st trip will be even more successful.

MORE ON SHAFT CAVE

by Dave Haun

On October 11th, George Brutchen, Jim Wolford, Keith Dunlap, and myself installed a new gate on Shaft. Someone had tried to put a steel dowel rod into one of the hinge pin holes to try and make the door jamb useless. This did not work, as we quickly removed the dowel from the hole. They tried to saw the other hinge pin hole, only being able to cut a very small section off of it. This was easily repaired, considering the amount of time and trouble it probably took the vandals to do it! One other thing they thought they were smart about was to beat and saw on the door stop. This is a flat piece of steel that keeps the door from swinging on into the pit. It also is part of the door lock.

The door stop was removed and easily replaced with a stronger and better designed system. The hinge pins were specially made by George Brutchen and should come to quite a surprise to the next vandal thinking of trying to saw them in two. The new door was installed in a very short time. The lock is placed up and under a special steel cover. To unlock the door now, a person has to reach down and around to get at the lock. This should make it tougher for the vandal. With each act of violence, new ideas are learned about how to cope with vandals. We are winning the vandal battle, it is just a matter of time!

More Vandalism! During the last of week of October, the gate was cut in half and partially removed. Exactly one week later, Shaft Cave had a rescue at it! It seems three persons rappelled into the pit late at night. They either thought they could hand over hand out, or maybe could use some useless gear. One of the guys made a makeshift climbing rig using knots. He made it to the top and went and called the State Police for help. The police called Dick Blenz, who in turn called Drew Pacman and Mike Miessen. They went and rescued the remaining people from the pit. If the gate had not been vandalized, then this rescue would not have happened! This again proves the intentions of the IKC are not in vane; just the vandals!

Brief Report on Wayne's Cave

Tom Rea

The Indiana Karst Conservancy assumed the management of Wayne's Cave on February 15, 1986 when a gate was installed. On April 6th the C.I.G. held their monthly grotto trip at Wayne's Cave with a thorough cleanup. On October 24, after finishing the Grotto fence, four C.I.G. members--Jim Wolford, Kieth Dunlap, Tom Rea, and George Brutchen--filled Keith's father's tri-axle farm truck with trash from the sinkhole beside the entrance.

The cave was originally locked with a combination lock which could be changed to make it easy to give access to visitors. These locks were too weak and three were broken off in quick succession so we changed to a key lock about the first of August. The key locks were broken off twice. Sometime about the first of October the gate was completely destroyed by having the bars sawed through and the majority of the gate was stolen. A new gate is being constructed and will be installed sometime in mid November.

Activity at the cave has been brisk. Since March there have been 15 trips involving 12 different groups. Except for one trip by the Northern Indiana Grotto and two by C.I.G. members, the groups have all been independent cavers. Subsequent to contact with the I.K.C. at least three of these cavers have joined the N.S.S., which was one of our subsidiary goals.

Seventy people have signed release forms for entrance to the cave. Several have written encouraging comments along with their requests as follows:

"The entrance as almost as clean as it was in the early '70s. . . We cleaned Camp Four with our gloved and bare hands. All the names and graffiti were removed. We picked up the trash from Camp Four to Camp Two. . . . The worst vandalism in the cave is being done by the E.C.C. We saw these initials 5 to 10 times. They stand for Edinburg Cave Club. They used spray paint and should not be allowed to return.

"Thanks again for what you are doing." /s/ Ray Sheldon, Columbus

"I would like to thank you for your expediency in responding. The information that I have read and heard about the Indiana Karst Conservancy sounds like a good program. I personally am behind the program 100%." /s/ James C. Tibbett, Bloomfield

"I feel I should support your efforts in protecting these caves. I'm glad the trash and parties we've seen in Wayne's are over when we ask your permission to enter it each winter." /s/ Herb Tellfors, Chicago

Our group sincerely appreciates the efforts by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and also your personal dedication to the N.S.S." /s/ Ray Sheldon, Columbus

The Indiana Karst Conservancy and Shiloh Cave
by Marty Atherton

In June 1986, Marty Atherton and Rusty and Cindy Riley visited the Elliott Stone Company quarry in Fayetteville to ask permission to enter the quarry entrance of Shiloh cave. Shiloh cave has two entrances, the quarry (lower) entrance, and the church entrance. The owner of the church entrance, Hillard Lewis, seldom gave permission to use the entrance on his property (The church entrance had a gate, but it was rusted open, and a lot of people went in that way despite the owner's wishes). The group knew that permission was sometimes given to enter the cave through the lower entrance.

A mobile home near the entrance to the quarry is the home of Jay Phillips, an employee of Elliott Stone Company. Phillips acts as a security guard for the quarry. Unfortunately for the group, Phillips had been roughed up a couple of weeks previously by some undesirable types who had come out of the quarry entrance. Phillips said that Dave Elliott, the owner, would allow no more access through the quarry. The cavers explained their involvement with the Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC), and Marty left a business card with Dave Haun's name (Haun is chairman of the Central Indiana Grotto).

The following day, Marty wrote a letter to Elliott in which he described the IKC and explained what it has to offer cave owners. He asked to meet to discuss a possible agreement. In the meantime, Elliott had called Dave Haun and expressed an interest in working with the IKC. In late June, Marty, Keith Dunlap and Bill Wilson drove to Fayetteville and met with Elliott, who was very positive about the situation. He was given a sample copy of a lease which he said he would examine. In late July, Bill Wilson received a copy of a lease for Shiloh cave signed by Dave Elliott. The lease is for a period of five years and gives the IKC legal responsibility for and access to the entrance and all passages beneath the property of Elliott Stone Company.

During the negotiations with Elliott, the IKC representatives did not attempt to contact the church entrance owner. This lack of action was intentional because it was felt that the IKC would have a much better bargaining position after completing an agreement with Elliott. Ironically, during this time period another individual had also taken an interest in Shiloh cave. A local unaffiliated caver had contacted Hillard Lewis and offered to secure the church entrance in return for personal access. Lewis was concerned about liability as well as frustrated by continued trespassing on his property, and accepted the individual's offer. It is reasonable to assume that Lewis would have been just as willing to work with the IKC members had they contacted him first. As it was, the IKC lost an opportunity to properly manage and control both entrances.

In early July the individual and his family spent several days rebuilding the old gate and concrete wall at the church entrance. He also took the initiative to build a barrier inside the quarry entrance, evidently without Lewis's knowledge and definitely without Elliott's permission. This action was not discovered until after the lease was signed with Elliott, when Marty contacted Lewis.

(SHILOH CAVE CONTINUED)

Lewis referred Marty to the individual, now acting as caretaker (with strong feelings of ownership) of the cave. The caretaker was suspicious when first contacted. He asked to see a copy of the lease and some printed information about the IKC before he would discuss the matter further. When he received the information, he telephoned Marty and apologized for his initial reaction. He explained his concern about damage to the cave - a concern shared by the IKC - and agreed to meet with Marty and Keith Dunlap to show them the cave and discuss an access arrangement.

In early September, Marty and Keith visited the cave and talked with the caretaker, who seemed friendly and willing to cooperate, but only on his own terms. His access proposal was inflexible. He agreed to allow one trip every other month, with the stipulation that he escort the trip and that either Marty or Keith be present. He also limited the party size to no more than five additional cavers. While Marty is the IKC patron of Shiloh cave, his duties are primarily limited to acting as a liaison between the caretaker and the organized caving community.

At this time, it seems reasonable to cooperate on those terms. While it is disappointing that the IKC has no physical access to the quarry entrance, removing the barrier (no simple task) seems to be unnecessary. The objective of protecting Shiloh cave has been met. The liability and trespassing concerns of both landowners have been diminished, and some access to the cave is available to the organized caving community. It is possible that as the IKC gains the confidence of the caretaker, his restrictions will be eased somewhat. If the relationship with the caretaker becomes unsatisfactory, the IKC has the option of legally removing the lower entrance barrier and managing the cave in a more liberal, yet responsible, manner.

Anyone interested in visiting Shiloh cave may contact:

Marty Atherton
1405 E. Hoefgen St.
Indianapolis, In 46203
(317) 783-2194

MORE MAIL...As we were going to press, Keith Dunlap received two constructive letters from Bloomington cavers in response to his "essay" on conservation. He asked that they be reprinted for they express sincere concerns that need addressing:

Keith,

Thank you very much for your informative letter explaining the Karst Conservancy. I have been interested in your organization since its formation. I agree with you on many of the points contained in your letter. I might add that I was one of the first people who stood up for your organization and welcomed your efforts at conservation.

The main problem that I see causing friction between the IKC and the BIG is the fact no easy access policy has been formulated for responsible local Bloomington cavers. You mentioned in your letter that such a policy has been discussed and is possibly forthcoming. I have heard this statement before, but I don't see it happening. Bill Wilson approached me and asked if I would be interested in being a liaison to your group, and be in effect the local key holder. Since then, nothing has been said about this matter. That is until I received your letter. I feel that such a policy should have been enacted from the start. This would have eliminated much tension between our two groups.

On the evening of November 4th, 1986, I received a call from Dick Blenz. Cave rescue in Shaft Cave. Don Pauquette, Drew Packman and myself arrived on the scene and effected a rescue of three novice cavers using improper climbing techniques. The gate was missing from the entrance and was no where to be found. The victims we are sure did not remove the gate. The point of all this is; we performed a rescue at a cave that we cannot normally enter. I know that in your last letter you said that nobody was telling me where I could or could not cave. This may seem to be true, but in fact it is not. The reason I say this is that since I must write a letter to Indianapolis, be granted permission, obtain a key and return the same which would take about a week at least. This makes a trip to Shaft far to difficult to deal with. Between my work and other obligations, sometimes I find a small amount of time at the spur of the moment that I can bounce a pit and get some exercise. The closest one is Shaft, but there is no way I can go there legally, and I can't get the key in time to go. So I must either find another cave or forget it. As time goes by the IKC gates more and more caves, and I have fewer and fewer options left to me. This scares me. It makes me mad. I'll bet it makes others scared and mad too. Some of us it might scare so bad that we become gate rappers and lock beaters. If some of our group is vandalizing your gates I can understand it. I don't condone this action, but I understand it. And you can't tell me that you won't gate every cave in the State because in ten or twenty years who knows what will be done. In the meantime you aren't getting much help protecting your investments here because of the existing situation. I realize that the NIG, CIG, EMG, and Mid-Hoosier Grotto are supporting you, but as far as these groups go, they are mostly located in Indy or beyond and it is but a minor inconvenience for them to obtain a key as you are in their path of travel more or less to their caving area. We are not. How would you feel if you had caves in your backyard and we gated them, and made you come to Bloomington to get the keys after years and years of free access (you can get a key, just come and get it). By an easy access provision being introduced for all gated caves in Indiana, you could make your group the strongest caving organization in Indiana.

The keys to these caves should be entrusted to an individual within all NSS Grottos. This person should also be an IKC member and control access in his area following IKC guidelines. Special instructions for certain caves should be followed and equipment checks made before entry granted, etc. This would allow easy access to known responsible cavers and restrict access to nerds. It would gain trust in your organization, promote membership and volunteer activities, such as daily checks on gates by local members. Repairs and replacement could be done by local people who know they aren't locking themselves out.

I would like to help you and would serve as liaison for your group in this area, but I can't approach my group unless an easy access provision is enacted. They would ask me what your group has done for them except lock them out of their favorite caves. As for your gates cutting down on rescues, this will not happen if you can't keep the gates on the cave. So I tell them, look, the caves are clean, neat and tidy, no vandals ripping and tearing. Lets go see this marvel, they say. So I reply, well we'll have to send away for the keys, but in a week or so we can go. This doesn't seem to work too well. These cavers would rather cave in dirty caves than not cave in clean ones. So I am sending you my \$25.00 membership fee as an act of good faith in your intentions and in hopes that it will re-enforce my position. I hope we can work together on this. If we can, I can assure a large amount of cooperation between our two groups. As you said, some people can't be satisfied, but the majority in this case could be pacified and even recruited by this one small gesture on your part. Please consult with me anytime.

Michael D. Miessen

Dear Keith,

Thank you for your informative and well thought-out letter. I can appreciate the time you took to organize and prepare it...

...When I wrote "I agree with the ideals, but the methods were all wrong.", I didn't mean the IKC's methods of conservation were wrong, but that the approach to some members of the BIG was wrong. Granted the IKC notified the BIG over six months ago of its formation and goals, and at that time the BIG showed little or no interest. That was six months. Now, obviously there is interest and that interest should be approach in a positive manner. I feel your letter was a big step in the right direction.

You mentioned in your letter that the BIG was the only grotto that has shown resistance to the IKC's cave-gating. Perhaps it's because it directly affects the Bloomington area. Although I don't go caving around here, if I did, I wouldn't want to plan several days in advance in order to go on a trip in my own back yard. If I lived in Chicago, etc., it would make little difference as I would have to plan in advance anyway.

By definition and I should hope, action, a grotto's role is to educate members in cave conservation, safety, techniques, and cave information. To exclude a local grotto such as the BIG from direct access to the caves in its area is a poor method of interaction. By giving the BIG a key, as well as other grottos, the IKC is acknowledging the importance of grottos and the need to work together. I think that handing the BIG the responsibility of protecting local caves, positive interest will increase...

Thank you for your time.
Holly M. Cook

[edited with permission]

COON CAVE

HIBERNACULUM FOR THE ENDANGERED SPECIES
MYOTIS SODALIS (THE INDIANA BAT)

ABSOLUTELY CLOSED

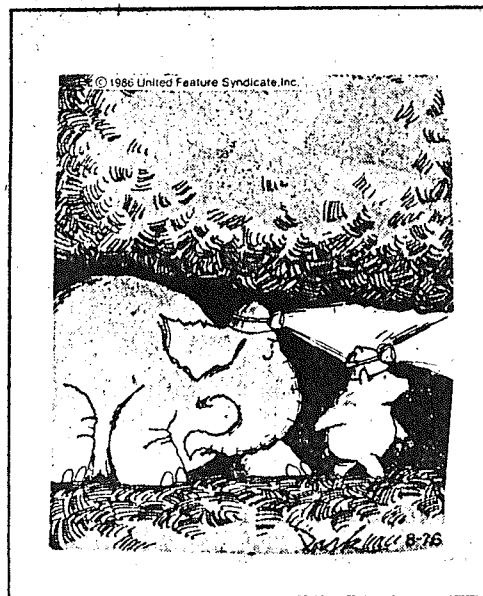
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OFF THE LEASH

By W.B. Park



↑ Coon (and Grotto) warning signs

"I didn't think you'd like spelunking, but do you listen to me? Heck, no."

If you have information that you feel should be in the IKC Update, or questions and comments, please send them to:

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Indianapolis, IN 46227

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