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News of the Washington Rock Climbers

October 31, 1945

Jan & Herb Conn

Ups and Downs

Chris Scored  
Helen Scored  
Eleanor Tatge

By Eleanor Tatge

In our last issue Jan & Herb Conn announced their resignation as editors of UP ROPE. The Washington Rock Climbers had already thought of it as their publication and hoped outsiders did too. With permission of the editors they officially adopted it as their own at the meeting of October 17, at Sterling Hendricks' home.

At that meeting, Chris appointed Arnold Wexler to take Jan Conn's job of secretary, and Jo & Paul Bradt to act (at least for the present) as UP ROPE editors. Eleanor Tatge, having refused the editorship, agreed to continue as chief assistant.

With this change everyone will miss the spontaneity and originality of Jan & Herb. The new editors will not equal them even with a lot of help. This they request. Still, one should think of this as a privilege. Before UP ROPE we as members of the Club didn't have a way of expressing our opinions without calling a meeting. Now a forum exists and we invite its use.

We miss you, Jan & Herb, and the group is going to be hard put to keep up with song writing, climb pioneering, paper editing, secretarial work, and where, oh where, will we ever find anyone who can hang on to shadows on the rocks as you two do. We hope you are having a grand time among your beloved Rockies.

The party met at the Hot Shoppe at Van Ness and Wisconsin, then drove up to the quarry near Great Falls, Virginia. Chris had several items of "unfinished business" to attend to, Helen had some sketching to do, and Eleanor was relegated to a day of belaying because of a bad knee. The first of Chris' items was some free rappelling off the Oscar's Fall Rock, using a carabiner on a rope around his leg. After several tries he became so proficient that his spectators expected him to burst into flame any minute. Second, he climbed the crack opposite Juliet's Balcony. Third, he climbed down a corner upstream from Juliet's Balcony to do some exploring, after which Helen made the same climb. The fourth, and most important item was the Stocking Climb, which Chris had tried unsuccessfully some time before. Of this he made a most successful traverse, and was followed by Helen, who likewise made a neat climb. An interested audience on the Maryland shore watched these feats with bated breath. We wonder what they thought we were trying to do. The weather this day was perfect, the autumn colors unbelievably gorgeous, and the trip much enjoyed.

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Saturday & Sunday, October 20 & 21, 1945

Mary Neilan  
Chuck Haworth  
Jim McDonough

By  
Mary Neilan

The group left Saturday morning to join Sterling Hendricks' group at Seneca (see below). Following Leo's directions, we crossed the mountains on Forest Service roads, got some breath-taking views of tumbled mountain tops, saw a deer, and boiled most of the water out of the radiator. We reached Champe Rock in time to lunch by the stream below, while Chuck considered a possible ascent of the edge of the west flake. Leo left the group to go on a scouting expedition, and reports that he caught sight of an interesting table top to the west.

With Chuck leading, Jim second, and Mary at the end of the rope (as usual), the ascent started up a chimney on the right side of the edge of the flake, followed an easy ledge above the chimney to a short climb into a cave on the west

face, and then up a very narrow chimney between the face and a small flake. The top of the flake offered a razor edge belaying station. Above it the climb continued up the west face, near the edge. As it was growing late and there was no chance of completing the climb that day, Mary climbed down the easy way, and Chuck moved out onto the edge, about 230 feet above the base, and then up and across it to a chimney in the center, which offered a chance to get above the overhang. An old piton, about 20 feet higher, emphasized the possibility, but the sun was setting. The climb was abandoned for the day, and the group left to join Sterling's party at the camp ground at Armentrout's.

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 19, 20, & 21, 1945

Sterling Hendricks  
Don Hubbard  
Arnold Wexler  
Jan Conn  
Herb Conn

Mary Neilan  
Chuck Haworth  
Jim McDonough  
Leo Scott  
Bill Kemper and friends

By Arnold Wexler

Sterling, Don, the Conns, and I left Washington early Friday morning by way of the Bull Run Mountains. Here we stopped while Sterling gathered seed for planting around his house. We then headed for West Virginia, digressing to drive up Fort Valley along Passage Creek to Elizabeth Furnace in order to view Buzzard Rock, continuing to Devil's Garden. There we made several ascents, the most outstanding being the Rattlesnake climb which was accomplished by Sterling, Jan, and Herb. That evening we camped at our usual place at Mouth of Seneca.

Saturday morning we drove to Nelson Rock and roped up in two teams, one consisting of Jan, Herb, and Don, and the other of Sterling and myself. We climbed the south section of the east flake of Nelson Rock, ascended the chimney between the first and second pinnacles, and after that climbed every pinnacle and step of the entire skyline of the flake. It is interesting to note that in a cave half way up the ridge we found a rusty C ration container in which was a register of the names of four or five Army men of the Seneca Army Mountaineering School. Apparently to the Army goes the credit of making the first complete traverse of Nelson Rock, for we found evidence of their activities all along the ridge. At times they had pitons placed in the most fortuitous positions. This traverse took us about 8 hours. In all probability it was the second traverse of Nelson Rock.

The other rope went up the first two pinnacles, descended into a gully between the east and the west flakes, climbed the pronounced chimney of the west flake to the ridge, and then went north several hundred feet exploring the climbing possibilities, finally returning along the south of ascent. Interesting notes: On part of their climbing they loosened a section of rock and it sounded as if the entire rock tumbled down. We all wondered who was coming down with the rocks. One of them had moved too near some loose stone and jostled it, and really made a racket.

We had an almost perfect day. The autumn foliage had its brightest colors. Nothing could have made the climbing any better.

That night we met our second car, which contained Chuck, Mary, Jim, and Leo. They had come up some time Saturday morning and had gone over to Champe Rock. Bill Kemper also stopped in with some of his friends from Dahlgren who had come up to do some caving. Saturday night Jan and Herb went with them into Mystic Cave, which was described by Leo in a recent issue of UP ROPE.

Sunday morning Herb, Jan, and Don drove to Schoolhouse Cave while the rest went to Champe Rock. In Schoolhouse where the party explored the continuation of Sam's Struggle, they had a very hectic time. Herb crawled through a passageway so narrow that to move forward or backward he had to exhale and draw in his stomach. In order to retreat he had to leave his shirt at the end of a passageway to make room for his body to get through the crawlway.

The rest of the party went to Champe Rock, where we divided into two teams, one consisting of Chuck and Jim, the other of Sterling and myself. We returned to the same climb that Chuck, Jim, and Mary had worked on the day before, the north face. It started off with a 30-foot chimney, followed by another chimney which was only about one foot wide, the bottom of which overhung about 6 feet. From the top of this second chimney rose a straight wall with moderately severe climbing for about 15 feet. A little tree protruded from the rock providing a very convenient belay spot. From here the route was around a nose out on the face proper of Champe providing a gosh-awful exposure. Fortunately the face was inclined at about 45 degrees, with adequate handholds and footholds to permit satisfactory progress upward. The route terminated below the pronounced overhang, which is so apparent from the north fork valley. We were in a cul-de-sac, for no satisfactory continuation of the climb presented itself unless one wanted to try human fly or daredevil tactics. We rappelled off the north face, then Sterling and Chuck investigated a chimney several hundred feet south

of the north face. They found a detached slab up which they could ascend for about 75 feet or so. From there they contemplated making a tension traverse into a chimney to see if the chimney could be ascended to the summit ridge. Using a double rope Sterling moved out on a very exposed face, looking like a fly stuck to fly paper from below, and finding that pitons were not necessary, continued across into the chimney. He returned to the flake, and Chuck investigated the chimney. Neither of them could find any hope of ascending it to the summit. Champe remains to be ascended

Sunday, October 28, 1945

Chris Scoredos	Fitz Clark
Helen Scoredos	Mary Judy
Don Hubbard	Dottie Hagerman
Dolores Alley	Dick Leonard
Sterling Hendricks	Arnold Wexler
Bill House	Eleanor Tatge
Clinton Morrison	L. H. Maxwell
William McLean	

By Eleanor Tatge

Perfectly beautiful autumn inspired the Carderock gang for a heavy day of belaying. Activities started with locating poor Oscar in order to sympathize with him in his cold loneliness at the bottom of the Potomac. While Dolores, Dot, and Mary were working on the Jackknife climb, Don, the Scoredos', Max, and Eleanor pumped up the Sink Stopper and girded themselves for the rescue. With the SS tied to the shore, Don managed, with the aid of sticks furnished by Chris, to tie a rope into Oscar's eye, after which he was hauled up on the River bank to live again. By the time Arnold and Fitz came back with the pulleys and ropes and got Oscar into workable condition for belays again, Mary, Dottie, Dolores and Max had to be shooed off the Chris-Wex-Don to let Oscar have full possession of his adopted cliff.

While practice belaying was in session, Sterling and Dick appeared to take their turns. (Welcome back from Burma, Dick.) Dick suggested the California style of practice belaying using a man for a dummy. All took turns at this sport, Chris manfully standing dummy for all the women. Bill House, Clinton Morrison, and William McLean arrived about this time,

and set to work maneuvering up the Beginner's Crack, Buckets of Blood Chimney, and Wexler's Worst. The day was finished off beautifully with exhibitions of how one does-- and how one doesn't--climb Leonard's Lunacy, and with serious attention given to the Key Climb.

Mary Neilan  
Mrs. Neilan  
Mr. Neilan

Andy Kauffman  
Betty Kauffman  
Harriet Hulbert

By Betty Kauffman

The Kauffmans and Harriet enjoyed for the first time the wonderful climbing and revealing view on Seneca Rock. The fall yellows and browns were magnificent and the weather was perfect. They climbed the South Peak, mostly from the east side, carefully avoiding overhangs and places where imagination has to provide the other handhold. Meanwhile Mary and her remarkably active parents walked in the valley below. Mr. Neilan, aged 60, got away from them and scrambled up the North Peak to the horror and admiration of all.

Correction: UP ROPE readers should be warned that when our reporter overconfidently takes shorthand notes via telephone most anything may appear in print. Helen Scoredos points out that her article of the last issue should read "Williamsburg, a restored town" not "resort town."

#### Fingertip Balance Climb (A-12)

The upper part of the Herzog Island cliffs includes a somewhat triangular rock area facing Scott Island. This triangle is slightly truncated at its upper acute angle, and has a sizable sycamore tree near its lower upstream corner. Here the climb begins.

It utilizes energy-saving knobs which dwindle as one approaches the upper third of the climb. Here the climber is forced to abandon the left-hand portion of the face for a bit of quartz in the center. Once on this quartz things can't get any worse, and the climb continues to the top.

This was first climbed by Arnold Wexler in August, 1943. Don Chris, Paul, and possibly others have climbed it since.

## Chris' Crack and Stocking Climb (B-13)

This climb is a traverse on the Virginia cliffs just below Great Falls, where the Potomac has just veered to the right as if deflected by the water coming down the fish ladder. The climb is down a short semi-chimney which at the bottom is just a little wider than Chris' reach. This puts the climber in a pothole downstream from the Stocking Traverse and Climb. The difficulty of this latter part lies in utilizing a shallow seam that diagonals upward to the right but is so small that an unshod toe is needed on the right foot. With

the toe here an ample advance hold is reached with the right hand so as to swing the right foot into the remote bucket hold that finishes the climb.

The climb was pioneered by Don Jacobs. Chris Scoredos proved last Sunday that it can be negotiated fully shod.

### Notice

Any climber who proposes to immortalize a climb by assigning it a name must needs think it is important enough to merit a description. Accordingly the editorial staff with the consent of Chris himself, imposes the following Rule:

In the future UP ROPE will not mention the name of a new climb until we possess a description sufficient to enable a stranger to locate and identify it. We hope such descriptions will accompany Ups and Downs reports in the future.