



UP ROPE!

NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCKCLIMBERS

Editors

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1717 R Street, N. W.
Washington 9, D. C.

Vol. 4, No. 18

Founders

Jan and Herb Conn
Published Twice Monthly
Price Five Cents

June 15, 1948

VACATION TIME!

(The Washington Rockclimbers have not officially sponsored summer vacation trips; they are arranged by individual members.)

The Washington climbers will make their annual exodus for chosen vacation spots by train, car, boat and airplane. As varied as individual temperament, taste and pocketbook permits, these hardy rockclimbers go elsewhere to enjoy their favorite sport in different surroundings, to sightsee, to tour and to worry about the same problems that plagued them during the winter months.

The Selkirks as in previous summers lures two separate parties who hope to rendezvous on the way out in the best "Dr. Livingston I presume!" tradition. First to leave, Betty and Andy Kauffman are leading a party into the Sir Sanford area and later in July; Sterling Hendricks, Donald Hubbard, Chris Scoredos, Arnold Wexler, Alvin Peterson and Dr. Farbergé will go into the same region by a different route.

Jane Showacre, Pim and Ken Karcher are also going into British Columbia to visit the Lake Louise Area and the Columbia ice field. Mary Neilan expects to accompany the Kauffman's as far as Golden, B. C.

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Earl Mosburg and Bill Lemnitzer have already left for Mount Katahdin, Maine. Jan and Herb Conn are going to the Black Hills Needles, Devil's Tower and other points west. Yosemite will be visited by Elliot Amidon, Judson Groff and Paul Brown. John Reed is going to Tennessee. Ellen and Lowell Bennett, Estelle and Tom Culverwell are already in the Tetons.

Switzerland will be visited by Joe Walsh and Bob Crane and Eleanor Tatge will visit São Paulo, Brazil.

We're looking forward to seeing a lot of pictures, hearing a lot of interesting stories and reading a lot of accounts of trips in Up Rope. Be prepared.

UPS AND DOWNS

Memorial Day Weekend May 29-31

Shawangunk Mountains

From Washington

Paul Bradt
Earl Mosbaugh
Helen Baker
Clara Lee
Herb Conn
Jan Conn
Arnold Wexler
Ken Cole
Kay Schad
Ted Schad

From New York Group, A.M.C.

Ed. Gross
Ann Gross
Fritz Weissner
Muriel Weissner
Howard Freedman
Herb Kothe
Francis Donaldson
Ellen Gammack
Betty Fisher
Lester Germer
Kay Hubbard
Norton Smith
Jean Smith
Don Lorimer
Roger Wolcott

From Boston Group, A.M.C.

John Gardner
Walter Howe
Jack Taylor
Marian Roberts
Jean Davis
Don Dolan
Jean Dolan
Bob Robes
Edith Mac Donald
Mary Gillette

Most of the gang arrived at the cliffs at about 2 P.M., to find Herb and Jan climbing with the Boston group. The crowd from New York arrived shortly thereafter, and pointed out many of the climbs.

While Arnold led Ted and Ken up the South Pillar climb, Herb and Jan climbed the Minty, and Paul, Earl, Helen, and Clara climbed in the vicinity of the North Pillar. While the others made another climb, Kay and Ted went down to make camp, but were foiled by rain, which, after soaking the climbers, relented enough to permit us to establish camp. The rain continued, off and on, all night.

Sunday morning, the weather was anything but promising. The entire group started to hike the four miles up to Mohonk Lake. Most of the Washington group stopped at the cliffs in the woods, near the parking area, with Howard Freeman, and in spite of the damp rocks made a number of climbs. Paul, Arnold and Clara climbed the Easy Overhang and the Three Pines, reporting that the top pitch on the Three Pines was very tricky. Jan, Howard, and Helen climbed the South Pillar and the Easy Overhang, while Herb, Ken, and Earl made the same climbs in reverse order.

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Arriving at Lake Mohonk at about 11:00 A. M. the rest of the climbers found the cliffs to be dry enough to permit climbing. While Fritz Weissner led a party of New Yorkers up the Dirty Climb, Ed Gross took a rope up the Little Face. In the afternoon Fritz led the Lakeview Climb, drawing cheers from the hotel guests, as he negotiated a tricky wet layback near the top. In the meantime, John Gardner led the Bostonians and Ted Schad up the Dirty Climb. This just served to warm up John, and he led the Overhanging Overhang and the Gargoyle.

A few light showers put an end to the day's climbing. Monday looked even less promising than the previous day, so an early start for home seemed in order. T.S.

June 6

June Mosburg
Earl Mosburg
Valerie Bradt
Robert A. Crane
Joan Price
Doug Price
Betty Price
John Reed
Pim Karcher
Ken Karcher
John A. Rocket
Richard H. Gaylord

Mr. Price
Betty Kauffman
Andy Kauffman
Dave Waddington
Arnold Wexler
Bruce Scull
Ted Schad
Eleanor Tatge
Chris Scoredos
Ted Waller
Helen Waller

Pete Peterson
Donald Hubbard
John Brand
Jane Showacre
Pim Karcher
Harald Drewes
Barbara Numear
Helen Scoredos
Eric Scoredos
Eleanor Jacobs
Don Jacobs

Rockclimbers turned out in record-breaking numbers to try their skill at Great Falls. A group paused to do some climbing on a face near the Corkscrew Climb and spent the morning climbing with varying degrees of skill and success.

The outstanding feature of the day was the successful ascent of the Bird's Nest Climb by six climbers: Jane Showacre, Harald Drewes, John Rocket, Arnold Wexler, John Reed, and Mr. Price. Most notable climb was that made by Mr. Price who had not climbed before. Guess good climbing ability runs in the Price family.

After the strenuous climbing many of the climbers went swimming; while others traversed along the river, worked on the Flatirons, the Indigestion Climb or just loafed.

June 13

Dolores Alley
Billy Alley
John Meenehan
Chris Scoredos
Ted Waller
Helen Waller

Jane Showacre
Pim Karcher
Ken Karcher
Richard H. Gaylord
Margaret Gooding
June Mosburg

Sue Finn
Harald Drewes
Donald Hubbard
Arnold Wexler
John Reed

Although it was a rainy day, the climbers tackled the rocks on the Virginia side of Great Falls with their usual enthusiasm. After working on a face near the Inverse Chimney, they started climbing on the Chimney itself. It was successfully climbed by Ted Waller, Harald Drewes, John Reed, Arnold Wexler, Chris Scoredos and John Meenehan. Later another chimney, near the Stocking Climb, was worked on. In the meantime, Donald Hubbard was giving the beginners instruction on the various techniques of climbing. After lunch the whole group went to the Indigestion Climb.

SOME TIPS FOR THE APPRENTICE MOUNTAINEER--Continued

Weather.

The novice has never had experience with mountain weather. Mountain storms are usually violent and often prolonged. A gentle drizzle or merely an overcast sky down in the valley frequently means high gales, driving sleet or snow, decreased visibility and ice-coated rocks a few thousand feet higher. No person inexperienced in mountaineering can come safely with a mountain storm, even if properly equipped. The dangers and difficulties of fair weather climbing are magnified a thousand times under the combined influence of high winds, verglas, cold, wet and shivering bodies and numb fingers and toes. The climber is physically and mentally dulled. Frostbite can be a serious danger. Even an experienced alpinist will push forward in bad weather only in cases of extreme urgency. If the weather seems threatening, the novice should remain in camp or change his plans to a hiking trip at lower altitudes. He should not be so foolhardy as to venture out in threatening weather or during a storm. If, in the course of a climb, the weather becomes ominous, he should turn back.

On the other hand, the possibility always exists that he will be caught in an unexpected tempest, for in the mountains the weather is likely to change abruptly. He should, therefore, carry extra clothing, preferably an extra sweater, windproof parka, and, at higher altitudes, mittens and extra socks. If his route lies over extensive snow slopes or névé, he should carry a compass and take occasional readings during good weather so that he may find his way back to camp in case of fog. In electric storms, he should keep away from exposed ridges. Finally, he should allow extra time in planning his climb to permit his party to descend safely in case of storm. To spend a night out in a mountain storm without the proper equipment or the proper know-how to create a shelter is generally fatal. The tombstones of Chamonix bear the names of countless rock-climbers who scorned the weather.

The novice should never take a chance on getting caught in a mountain storm: but should he be so caught, he must immediately give up his plans and begin his descent to camp without waiting for the skies to clear.

Persons who wish to disregard the risks of mountain weather would do well to read the accounts of the 1936 Eigerwand disaster and the 1934 Nanga Parbat tragedy.

Rock Slides. Here a few words to the novice will suffice. He must bear in mind chiefly that, while on local cliffs at home he takes precautions against the fall of an occasional stone, in the mountains the far vaster amount of cliff above him is likely to yield a larger number of falling stones and that their velocity will probably be higher owing to the greater distance of their fall. A single stone the size of a hen's egg has been known to kill a man.

First, the novice should be careful not to dislodge stones which may fall on his companions below, and if he should dislodge them, he should give adequate warning. Second, he should avoid climbing in any gullies whose base has a broad avalanche fan of fallen rock, particularly if some of those rocks bear traces of having recently come down. If the base of the gully is snow-covered, he should inspect the surface to see whether it is littered with stones. In general he should avoid all gullies, though this is sometimes impossible. Still, last summer's fatality above Lake Tahoe demonstrates strikingly that the beginner must avoid any area where he may be exposed to heavy stone fall.

In case he should be caught beneath falling rock, the climber must immediately seek shelter beneath the nearest rock projection, or, failing that, flatten himself against the cliff. He should avoid the tendency to move away from the face. He should seek cover in the same manner as a soldier under fire.

Time and the Elevation Differential. Two interrelated factors, which the beginner often fails to appreciate in planning a climb are the elevation differential and the time element. These factors have direct bearing on the success or failure of excursions, and climbers who have disregarded them have frequently placed themselves in serious difficulties.

In the mountains, differences in elevation are of far greater importance than the distances involved. The beginner often tries to plan his trip in terms of mileage, whereas it would be infinitely more advantageous were he to gauge it in terms of altitude differential and hours. To climb a ten thousand foot peak from a camp at four thousand feet is a proportionately far more arduous undertaking than the ascent of a New England mountain of five thousand feet from a 2,000 foot base. In addition, the mountaineer on a high peak must consider the technical aspects involved and, above the 10,000 to 11,000 foot level, should begin to make allowances for the effects of altitude.

To illustrate: Mount Washington can usually be scaled in three hours from Pinkham Notch, an altitude differential of four thousand feet. But in order to make the ascent of Uto Peak from Glacier (an altitude differential of 6,000 feet, considerably less than twice the Pinkham-Washington differential) the trained mountaineer, under good conditions, allows a full seven or eight hours, and a person who has not had considerable training in the mountains should allow almost 1/2 as many hours more. Thus, the beginner must develop a new sense of proportion and adjust his thinking to the altered type of terrain.

In considering the matter of altitude differential and timing, the question of pace is of almost supreme importance. The beginner has a tendency to climb fast and rest frequently. Yet the exact reverse pattern should be observed. He should stop infrequently, preferably not more than once an hour and not more than five minutes at a time. He should plan his stops to coincide as often as possible with the performance of some specific act directly related to the ascent, such as putting on the rope, changing leaders, studying the route, etc. A slow, rhythmic pace conserves energy for the hard part of the climb and for the trip down, and pays off far better than any amount of rushing interrupted by numerous and extended halts.

On a good trail a man can usually climb 1,000 feet an hour without over-exerting himself. If he is not in good shape and tries to increase this rate, he is likely to be exhausted long before the real mountaineering has started, especially if he must climb a total of several thousand feet. If he is in good physical condition--usually not reached until he has spent a week or more in the mountains--he can considerably increase this rate of climb. For persons in good shape 1,500 or even 2,000 feet an hour is not unusual, but the beginner must beware of trying to go fast. It is far better to go slowly and steadily than to hurry.

Of course, the rate of 1,000 feet an hour cannot be maintained once serious difficulties are encountered. A party of three, moving one at a time, will be lucky to gain 400 to 500 feet an hour. On more difficult passages, 200 to 300 feet will be the maximum. In planning his climb, the novice must judge roughly the amount of time it will take him to overcome the various portions of the climb, including rest periods. He should then add the figures all up in his mind and allow 1/3 to 1/2 the same amount of time for the descent. He must always bear in mind that it will take him a good deal longer to make a specific ascent than it would an experienced party.

This matter of timing is of extreme importance in planning any mountain ascent. Yet it is something which the novice tends to neglect. It is far better to allow twice as much time as one thinks will be needed than to allow a mere hour too little. An error on the short

side can mean the difference between spending the night on a cold, exposed ledge and a steak dinner in camp. Besides, the higher figure is likely to be the more accurate.

No beginner should undertake any climb which he feels may conceivably take longer than the time between dawn and dusk. A forced bivouac, in addition to being unpleasant, can prove to be exceedingly dangerous. The beginner should plan on an early start and, if possible, an early return. Conditions are usually far safer and more pleasant in the cool early hours than they are later in the day. The dangers of rock falls and avalanches are minimized and frozen snow makes for easy footing, even where crampons are necessary. He should also allow plenty of time to get down off the peak. A mountain trip is a two-way affair; one must go up, but one must also come down again. As previously stated, $1/3$ to $1/2$ as much time is a reasonable allowance for the trip down under usual conditions.

Should the beginner be delayed by some obstacle far beyond the amount of time he has estimated it will take him to overcome it, he should call the trip off and return to camp rather than risk a forced bivouac. Under no circumstances should he climb at night, except on a graded trail. He should only then do so with benefit of flashlights and must not leave the trail. Last spring's accident in the Yosemite sharply illustrates the necessity for the beginner to abide by this rule. If he should be caught by darkness in an exposed position, he must bivouac, irrespective of the risks involved. He may continue down in the dark only in case of storm.

Finally, the beginner must also consider the effects of an extended climb, the effects of time and the altitude differential on the members of the party. On the descent the group will be suffering with both physical and mental weariness. The trip home is usually an anticlimax, the goal has been won, the climbers are tired, anxious to get back to camp. They are also travelling more rapidly than on the way up and are therefore more likely to neglect their footing. In addition, it is late in the day and conditions on the mountain have deteriorated under the influence of a hot sun. Under such circumstances, precautions must be redoubled. Many mountaineers have saved their lives by wilfully slowing to a snail's pace on the descent instead of hurrying at reckless speed into camp. The beginner should do well to remember that about 70 percent of all mountain accidents occur while the party is in process of descending. It is quicker to go down, but it is also likely to be more dangerous.

I can think of many instances where the beginner's failure to appreciate the importance of elevation differential and the timing element defeated him in his purpose of making an ascent, and, where it didn't defeat him, caused anxiety among those whom he had left below.

(To be Continued)

