

NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCK CLIMBERS

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Editor

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Founders

Jan and Herb Conn

FIVE CENTS A COPY

Notice of Evening Meeting

Subject. Andrew J. Kaufmann will discuss the 1948 expedition into the northern Selkirks from the viewpoint of the party which traversed the area from north to south, and will illustrate his talk with colored slides taken on the trip. If arrangements can be completed, the motion picture taken on the trip will be shown.

Time. Saturday, January 15, 1949, at 8:00 P. M.

Place. Residence of Sterling Hendricks at 1118 Dale Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland. To reach Sterling's home by car, follow Georgia Ave. to Silver Spring and turn right on Colesville Pike. At Dale Drive (Mrs. K's Tea House) turn left. Sterling's house is about 0.3 mile from the turn. The junction of Dale Drive and Colesville Pike may be reached by either the Z-4 or Z-6 buses, which start from Georgia and Alaska. Sterling's phone is SHepherd 4603.

January Cave Trip

A trip to Clark's Cave, near Millboro Springs, Virginia, is scheduled for the week end of January 29-30: John Meenehan, leader. The cave has four entrances in a limestone cliff above a bend in the Cowpasture River. The entrances are reached by descents of varying degrees of difficulty, down the cliff from the top. The cave was generally dry when visited last Spring, and consists of a maze of criss-crossing passageways, not all of which have been explored. The Grand

footholds were covered with snow and ice, and so a snowball fight served to use up excess energy. The Beginner's Crack was successfully climbed, but on all the other climbs attempted there was too much snow and ice for the Pramoni's to stick.

Friday, December 26

Dick Goldman

Chris Scoredos

Frances Bittenger

John Reed

Carderock, Md.

Dick Gaylord

Eleanor Tatge

The first business of the day was to check the thickness of the ice at the Carderock skating pond. When Eleanor, chosen to test the ice because she alone was sufficiently optimistic to bring her skates, ventured out it cracked ominously, and one and one-half inches of thickness was judged not sufficient for skating. The Easter Egg Climbs received most attention, and the Blue Easter Egg Climb was given a good workout. Francis negotiated the Overhang, and then Dick, Francis, Eleanor, and Chris climbed the inside corner at the river end of the Chris-Jex-Don traverse while John belayed. All went home shortly after noon.

MIDWEST MAMMAL by John Keenchan

(Extracted from the November issue of the D. C. Spelograph)

In our area of the country we find only four main groups of bats and it is possible to make a reasonably accurate identification on the spot where you find them. The Ministrellus with a pink forearm easily visible as he hangs is one of the most common bats, and is very small. Myotis or Small Brown Bat is mostly dark brown on top with a lighter colored belly; but the easiest way to identify him is to eliminate the other families. Eptesicus or Big Brown Bat has long teeth and is the only bat that can bite through the skin. Just stick out your finger. Corynorhinus or Lumpy Nose Bat has long ears that make him look like a flying jackass. The ears, in rest, may be curled against the skull. On close examination you can see the facial sense organs that give him his name. He is generally found above 2,200 feet but not too much is known about his habits.

It is hard to describe the grace and beauty of the flight of bats. They make most birds look clumsy by comparison. They can see in the light very well but appear to depend almost entirely on sound wave reflections for guidance. When first released in a strange room they set up a very definite search pattern and start a thorough tour of exploration. They have a remarkable memory and before long they show by their actions that they know exactly where objects are located. When satisfied with their search they establish a flight pattern that will vary only slightly as long as they fly in that room. It is a mistaken idea that bats never brush anything in flight. Quite often they brushed against me after they became accustomed to my presence and they don't seem to mind their wings striking objects lightly. I have never seen a solid collision, however. When ready to hang up they invert their bodies momentarily and grab for the ceiling. Blind chance seems to govern whether or not they find something to cling to, but they don't

is quite much. The thickness of this organ is enough space to allow them to hang in comfort. Mr. Walker, Assistant Director of the Zoo, has a picture of a bat hanging from an almost invisible flaw in an incandescent light bulb.

Bats are quite at home on the ground and can crawl rapidly. When they fly they throw their bodies into the air by a strong down thrust of the wings. They can also swim but share their enthusiasm for that sport with cats. The erratic flight of a free bat, as seen in the dusk of a summer evening, is due to his search for insects of which he can eat several times his own weight in the course of a night's hunting. When a bug is captured the bat maneuvers him into a position for eating by tucking his head against the wing root or the apron between his legs and tail which is used as a pocket. Bats require a lot of water, which they lap like a dog or sometimes by skimming over a stream or lake. Occasionally a large fish has his mouth open at the right time and --. To our eyes the face of a bat is quite ugly though this may be only prejudice as I have seen bats shudder slightly when they looked at me. The purpose of most of the organs visible on their heads is unknown; presumably they have to do with the sound apparatus used in location.

The bat was the hero of one of the most remarkable projects of the late War. Dr. Lytle S. Adams, a member of the National Speleological Society, conceived the idea of releasing bats over Japanese cities with attached incendiary bombs, the idea being that the bats would seek haven in houses and other buildings and give the Japs a military hotfoot. In a test a dummy village was reduced to ashes and when a bomb-bat escaped at Carlsbad, an airfield suffered the same fate. The project was finally abandoned in late 1944, presumably because the atom bomb was on the way.

Further batty details about this interesting creature, including notes on banding technique, may be obtained from John's original SPELEOLOGICAL paper.

LAST MINUTE FLASH: Our Chairman, Arnold Vexler, advises us that another year has rolled around, and elections are again in order. New officers will be selected at the next meeting of the Rock Climbing Club.