

NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCK CLIMBERS

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CONCLUDING INSTALLMENT

Friends and Fellow Rock Climbers: Please find your last copy of UP ROPE (for April 22), turn to page 5, and note the article headed

IN SUPPORT OF AN INDEPENDENT CLIMBING GROUP

By Herb Conn

and let us go on. It seems that your absent-minded Editor inadvertently stopped right in the middle of Herb's pointed discussion of the "Question of the Day." Such suppression of opinion cannot be tolerated; maybe if we were on the other side of the question we might consider tolerating it, but under the circumstances no, the truth must have full expression. The story continues (we are repeating first the last paragraph on page 5):

Organizations develop naturally through the mutual interests and activity of their members. It is significant that the Rock Climbers have grown inevitably away from the Trail Club, and the trend will not likely change no matter what official action is taken.

If by our vote we express ourselves as desiring Trail Club sponsorship, we might reasonably expect our trips to be run more akin to Trail Club trips. Yet even the Trail Club enthusiasts among us are insistent that rock climbing trips be as informal and impromptu as ever. Obviously they will, and the two-thirds of our active group who no longer enjoy the full privileges of membership will make jokes about their loss and continue climbing as before. But I predict that few of them will rush to join the Trail Club, and there will continue to be a shortage of voters and eligible candidates for elective offices each election time. Far from ending the confusion of the present arrangement, the farce of an active group a part of the Trail Club in name only, will be heightened.

Neither Rock Climbers nor Trail Club want an arrangement which is not satisfactory to both parties. Closer affiliation in name only means that the old basic sources of irritation will inevitably recur. But by choosing an independent course neither organization will suffer. Trail activities will continue as before, and every individual is free to belong to the Rock Climbers, the Trail Club, or both, depending on his individual interests.

Trail Club advocates state we have much to gain through closer union. A permanent address has its advantages, although it has been suggested that a Post Office box in the name of the rock climbers could provide us with one at little cost. A little regular correspondence and exchange of publications with other climbing groups throughout the country can do as much and more to make our name known to visiting climbers as a tighter link with PATC. Certainly these matters are not vital enough to risk rushing into an organization which has proved of interest to only one-third of our active membership.

Let's stop beating our heads against the wall. Let's have a club wherein we are free to admit openly and honestly that the only qualification for equal participation is an interest in the sport of rock climbing. With an independent climbing group, we will be assured of a small, enthusiastic, and active organization. Membership will be open to anyone interested, without the danger that one or more will not be acceptable to the majority of the Trail Club Council. We will not have to contribute dues several times as high as our present assessment for the support of a large organizational structure devoted to purposes many of us are not interested in.

From past experience we know that the desire to climb rocks is strong enough in sufficient people to keep interest awake and attract a steady turnout in spite of such discouraging factors as war-time restrictions and adverse weather. We need no one's helping hand to keep us going. If not on paper, we do already have in fact a going organization with its own membership roster, its own treasury, and its own publication. Let's vote for complete independence and have in addition our own name.

Ups and Downs

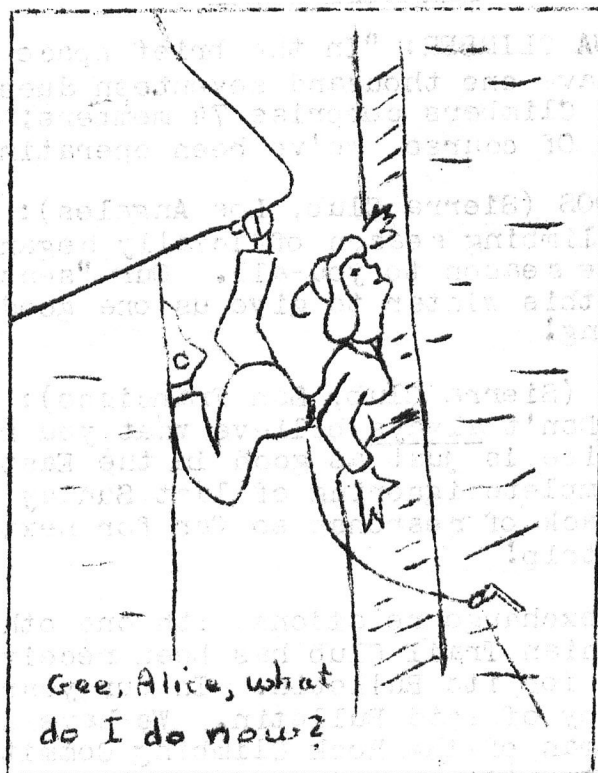
Chris Scoredos	Marion Harvey	Mary Mitchell	Al Webb
Eric Scoredos	Marion Warmold	Maxine Haleff	Jean Burnstad
Duncan Burchard	Marion Jackson	Mary Sturgeon	Johnny Reed
Herb Conn			

The weather forecast of continued fair brought a turnout of optimistic climbers to the Hot Shoppe in spite of steady rain. The scheduled trip to the Bull Run Mountains, however, seemed a little too ambitious in view of the downpour, and the equally wet but closer rocks of Carderock were chosen instead.

While the rest of the group slogged along the muddy towpath, Chris, Eric, and Marion Jackson voyaged in style in the Scoredos 5-man Sink Stopper, a veritable Leviathan among the rubber boat flotilla. (It takes a lot of air, Marion reports, to inflate such a titanic tub).

Ropes were promptly suspended over the Beginners' Crack and Ronnie's Leap, and these climbs were found slippery but negotiable. Herb seized a lull in the storm to climb Sterling's Crack, but he left the holds too wet to please those who tried to follow. Beginner Jean Burstad made a noble attempt to climb Ronnie's Leap, which she was determined to complete (from where she left off, two-thirds of the way up) on the next dry Sunday.

We welcome Al Webb to our group, a climber from the New York and Boston A.M.C. who drove all the way from Frederick just to see if the Washington climbers function in the rain. Mary Sturgeon arrived



at mid day on a hike with two girl friends. The girl friends cheered as Mary gave them a demonstration of movement in the vertical plane before the hike was resumed.

Jessie Woodwell Oliver Westfall Norman Goldstein
George Kamm Loraine Snyder Tony Soler

April 23 (as also the above account!) The group left Washington Friday at 6:00 P.M. They arrived at Cass, West Virginia approximately at midnight. Suicide Cave was located about 4:00 A.M. (Some trouble recognizing landmarks, eh, Norm?) It was entered immediately in order to be able to leave before a group of Spelunkers, who were due Saturday, would arrive. The wire ladder was found in good shape. The group descended and explored the cave. The most numerous and most interesting formations were at the far end of the cave along with a deep, clear pool of water.

Loraine, on her climb back up the 180 foot ladder found that her safety rope had gone through the ladder on the way down to her. Untying, pulling the rope through the ladder, and retying at 100 feet above the cave floor seems as good a way as any to initiate a newcomer to caving and climbing.

The party left the cave on Saturday about 11 o'clock, just as the Spelunkers were coming in; and headed for Seneca Rock. On Sunday, after a wet night, several of the group attempted unsuccessfully to find a local cave, and the others headed for Seneca Rock. Later in the day, in between showers, most of them climbed the Old Women's trail to the top of the Rock.

Exchange Notes

From THE IOWA CLIMBER: "In the brief space of ten years the Iowa Mountaineers have one thousand seventeen dues paying members." The Washington Rock Climbers comprise 74 members; I wonder how many are "dues paying"! Of course, we've been operating only 9 years.

From MUGELNOOS (Sierra Club, Los Angeles): "CLIMBING SEASON STARTS: The rock climbing season officially began Friday, March 31." Good luck and a fine season to you-all. Our "season" never even paused long enough this winter to give us one good day's ice skating. We're not complaining!

From YODELER (Sierra Club, San Francisco): "Rock Climbers, Please Take Note! Don't always believe what you read in the Schedule." Apparently this advice is just as good in the East as in the West, judging from the complete ignoring of last Sunday's scheduled Bull Run trip, and the lack of response so far for next Sunday's scheduled Appomatox scouting trip!

We maintain exchange relations with one other organization, The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has been receiving two copies of UP ROPE in exchange for its Bulletin. In our year as Editor we have never yet seen a copy of said Bulletin. We have discussed the omission with the Chairman of the Rock Climbing Committee, we have discussed it with the President of the Trail Club: still no Bulletin. Hm. Do you suppose "affiliate members" don't even rate knowing what gives with the Trail Club?

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