



NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING COMMITTEE

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Feb. 9-10-11, 1951. Shaffer Rocks, Hermitage Shelter - Leader: Arnold Wexler.
See last issue of UP. ROPE for details, or call Arnold.

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Feb. 17-18, 1951. CAVE TRIP - Leaders: Paul Bradt and Ray Moore.

Two years ago the then rock-climbing committee ran a cave trip for the Trail Club. Those who went on that trip have been clamouring for another. THIS IS IT.

The attractions this time are Poor Farm Cave and Patton's Cave, in the order named. The former offers sleeping quarters and will be the meeting place on Saturday. To reach it, follow U.S. 219 through Hillsboro, West Virginia (just south of Marlinton, West Virginia) for 0.6 m. From there follow instructions posted on the windshield of a gray jeep station wagon (belonging to the Bradts) parked in a driveway on the left side of the road. Come prepared to carry your bedding and food approximately 0.5 mile to the cave.

Poor Farm is mainly a dry cave. Patton's a wet one. The leaders on this trip are Paul Bradt and Ray Moore but they hope to have a lot of help from the Mountaineering Committee. These are much larger caves than were visited last time and it should be a lot of fun exploring them in small parties. Be sure to bring water, compass, safety rope and illumination. While the rope may not be used, there should be one in each party. Food will be taken care of by individual car groups.

This will be a private car trip. The drive of about seven hours each way is somewhat long but the quality of the caves justifies it. If you wish transportation or have extra places in your car, call Paul at Georgia 3917. \$6.00 has been suggested as the transportation charge but individual drivers may set their own prices.

* * * * *

The mystery of Duncan Burchard's disappearance from the local rocks has been solved. He has traded his mountain nylon for manila hemp in the Coast Guard. Presently stationed at New London, he expects to soon be transferred to Boston. We hope he will get down to join us occasionally on the local rocks.

NEPTUNE AND SOME LESSER GODS

by Arnold Wexler

Mountaineering in the northern Selkirks invariably involves heavy backpacking over difficult terrain. If the mountains are approached from the east, an added obstacle confronts the climber: the Columbia River has to be crossed. In order to reach Mt. Neptune, in the Windy Range, it was necessary, first, to cross the Columbia where it has broadened into Kinbasket Lake and, then, to push up Trident Creek. Sidney Webber, local trapper, guide and boatman had agreed to ferry us across the two-mile breadth of the lake to the mouth of Trident Creek.

A letter from W. S. Hamilton, a mining engineer who was developing a claim near the mouth of Windy Creek, had put us in touch with Sid. In his letter, Hamilton had been kind enough to warn us about the mosquitoes. "If I were you," he wrote, "I would make careful inquiries regarding the mosquito crop, as these have just chased my men out." When we contacted Sid, he was equally unenthusiastic about the mosquitoes. "They're the worst I've ever seen," he remarked, adding, "and I've been around these parts since the first World War". We weren't too concerned, for we were equipped with headnets and insect repellent.

On the evening of July 30, 1950, Don Hubbard, Norman Goldstein and I arrived at Kinbasket Lake and were met by Alex Faberge, who had that same day come out of the Adamant Range along Swan Creek. (Ed. See UP ROPE, Jan. 4, 1951) The following morning, we tossed our duffel into Sid's dory, clambered aboard and shoved off. Part way across the placid waters of the lake, the diminutive outboard motor began to wheeze and whine, but Sid coaxed and cajoled the engine into maintaining a semblance of life until we were fifty feet from the far shore. Then it coughed and died. We poled onto the beach, shouldered packs and stepped into the bush. Later, we learned that Sid had had to row back to the other shore.

In 1937, Misses K. Gardner and L. Guest, with Swiss guides E. Feuz, Jr. and C. Hasler, Jr., had traveled up Trident Creek and made the first ascent of Trident Peak (ca 10,200 feet). From their accounts, we erroneously inferred that the four or five miles to the glacier might be completed in one day. To heighten this misconception, we made relatively good progress for the first hour, rapidly gaining elevation on the steep shoulder of the true right (south) wall of the valley. A game trail ran through a wonderful stand of towering cedars, with trees over five and six feet in diameter.

This was Norman's first experience with Selkirk country. He obviously was unimpressed for he had been briefed on the difficulty of the bush, the ferocity of the mosquitoes and the perversity of the weather, and he still had to be convinced that we weren't pulling his leg. One doesn't go far through Selkirk forest, however, without becoming painfully intimate with devil's club, undergrowth, wind falls and slide alder. These impediments, augmented by the legions of buzzing, probing, tormenting mosquitoes, who incessantly sought and found the least opening in headnet or clothes, took over with a vengeance. We bogged down to a tediously slow crawl in which progress ceased to be a function solely of the feet, but, instead, became equally dependent on the hands.

The first night was spent in deep timber on ground cleared and leveled with ice axes to accommodate the tents. The next night an unperturbed porcupine permitted us to bed down in his back yard. By noon on the third day, the bush was just a bad dream.

Norman now admitted that the Guatemala jungle was no worse than this.

A scoured basin littered with chaotic debris left by the retreating glacier confronted us; at its upper end, a tongue of ice hovered over a headwall of

polished rock, and the outflow from the glacier was discharged tumultuously over the headwall in several long feathery columns of water. A wide lateral bench part way up the cliff connected with the abrupt, true right (south) lateral moraine. The latter served as a path along the edge of Trident Glacier to the high alpine meadows where we erected our tents.

There was ample incentive during the trek to camp for pausing, with ever increasing frequency, to photograph, to study the geology of the region, and to watch the antics of a herd of goats. One goat demonstrated that even four-legged climbers slip and fall! Another came within ten feet of Don and myself, but a close look convinced him that his immediate welfare lay elsewhere.

On Wednesday, August 2, we set out to reconnoiter. The wind had blown with unusual vigor during the night and the tents, purposely perched on an exposed rise to discourage the accumulation of too many mosquitoes, had flapped with enough abandon to suggest that they and their occupants might, at any moment, become airborne. Sleep had been occasionally disrupted by the disturbing responses of the nylon fabric to the frequent gushes.

Rising above Trident Glacier, at the corner of the range overlooking the confluence of Windy Creek with Kinbasket Lake, was Pluto (ca. 10,100). The approach to its summit was over a long but easy neve, the smooth monotony of which was broken by several bridged crevasses. A short rock spire formed an attractive apex to the mountain. At ten we were on top. An ever-blackening sky soon hid the surrounding mountains, while a cold wind and sporadic flurries of snow intensified the somber aspect of the narrowing scene. We caught a brief glimpse of Neptune. This, together with the observations Alex had made earlier in the summer from Mt. Edfalls, convinced us that an advanced camp could be established nearer Neptune, from which to assault the monarch of Windy Range.

We erected a cairn from broken rubble, and then returned rapidly to camp in hope that a start could be made for Neptune that same day. It was wishful thinking, for the weather had been building up to a climax all morning. It rained intermittently at camp while higher, the glacier and peaks were hidden by seething clouds. Sometime near noon, the following day, in an unguarded moment of optimism during a lull between squalls, we broke camp, and, with several days supplies, headed up the glacier.

It wasn't long before we experienced the uncomfortable consequences of our actions. A heavy mist settled down on the glacier and a miserable rain settled down on us. We rigged up a tarp among some rocks, crawled under and waited. Patience is a wonderful virtue and it eventually paid dividends. The rain let up and the mist rose enough so that we were able to proceed. Perhaps we should have retreated, but we felt that we could readily reach Dolphin Col (ca. 8,500) on the ridge separating Trident Glacier from the catchment area around Neptune, and then, if nothing more, reconnoiter the far side and return. The view from the col was unenlightening: snow fading into mist within 100 feet. Again we sat down to wait. Then for a brief moment the mist dissolved disclosing a glacier that rapidly dropped between a spur on the left and the main divide on the right, into a deep valley. Encouraged by this sight, we decided that with compass and caution it might be feasible to descend and locate a camp. Have you ever walked with your eyes shut over uneven ground, without knowing whether the next step was up or down? If you have then you may realize, in a small way, our situation. The mist had swallowed us up again, limiting visibility to less than a rope length. The scattered flat light that filtered through failed to produce the slightest shadow in the snow and ice. The eye was utterly useless in guiding the foot since the lack of shadow eliminated all perspective. It was disconcerting not to know, until too late, that the foot would drop into a hollow or suddenly strike a crest.

In retrospect, it is amusing to recall how we stumbled and tottered, but at the time, it was extremely vexing. We succeeded in avoiding the crevasses and seracs of Mist Glacier by hugging the true right edge. Finally we reached several broad connecting rock shelves. These led to an incipient lateral moraine on which some scrub growth eked out a precarious existence. We dug into the declivity, leveled out platforms for the tents, and were home.

The following morning dawned bright and clear. We set out to climb Neptune, but the mountain proved elusive. The precise location of the peak was unknown, for on the previous day, when we would have oriented ourselves and selected a feasible route, we were limited in view to the immediate vicinity of our awkward and reluctant feet. Now, as we climbed above our camp, the foreshortened view that unfolded gave no inkling as to which of several summits was our objective. Don did an excellent job of cutting steps up the tongue of a hanging glacier. The upper snowfield was bisected by a spur. We entered the northern basin, then worked up a steep snow gully, over the spur, to the southern basin. Here we decided that Norman should lead a long and high angle snow slope to the summit ridge. But before Norm had ventured more than six steps, the Old Maestro took over again and announced that if we were ever going to get to the top, we'd better start climbing and not assume that we were already there. With that, he once more began kicking steps. In vain did we protest that this was not an Olympic race; in vain did we beg and plead with him to permit us to catch our breaths. Only after he had reached the corniced arete did he slacken his mad pace. Perhaps it was the overhanging ice on the other side of the crest that brought him to his senses. We now had a ticklish section of corniced ridge to traverse where a slip, if not arrested, would give the party an unimpeded free ride to some distant and more horizontal ground below. There wasn't much more than a rope length of this delicate snow. Beyond, the arete rose quickly into the rock summit. It was not until we stood on top that we realized that we had not climbed Neptune, but Cronus (ca. 10,200), a peak immediately to the SW.

That night we went into a huddle. Should we make another attempt on Neptune or should we return to our former camp behind Trident Glacier? First, there was a divergence of opinion as to whether Neptune could be climbed from the SE above our present camp. Questions were raised as to the feasibility of ascending the rock tower that constituted the summit of Neptune. Then, too, there was even doubt as to whether the base of the tower could be reached, for below it there was a long steep slope that appeared icy, and we had no crampons or ice pitons. Finally, our camp was in a miserable spot, although the only possible one at this elevation. It appears highly irrational to have permitted such physical and esthetic considerations as personal convenience and camp location to have influenced our decision, but I must admit that that was the case. We were reluctant to spend more than this night here. We therefore decided to move on the following morning and at the same time to tackle Neptune from the NE, for we would be returning in that direction.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE. BE SURE TO READ THE ENDING
OF THIS ENTHRALLING EPIC BY OUR ADVENTUROUS ARNOLD & CO.

* * * * *

Last summer, a French expedition climbed the first peak of over 26,000 feet. Two members of the nine man expedition, Herzog and Lachenal, reached the summit of Annapurna (26,500 feet), in western Nepal. Both men suffered severely from frostbitten hands and feet when they lost their way and were forced to bivouac above their high camp.

* * * * *

UPS AND DOWNS

January 28, 1951. Great Falls, Maryland.

Duncan Burchard
Walter Downs
Charlie Gallant

Peg Keister
Art Lembeck

John Meenehan
Hans Scheltema

Bunky Smith
Mary Sturgeon
Arnold Wexler

Cloudy skies and scattered raindrops failed to stop the rock-climbers from getting their weekly exercise. After greetings had been exchanged with our old friend, Duncan Burchard, home on leave from the Coast Guard, the group headed for the Great Falls Gorge. Soon after arrival, the weather improved (but the improvement had little effect on the wet lichens) and the group executed a few warm-up climbs. Art, Arnold, Charlie and several others tried a tricky off-balance overhang just downstream from Peg's Progress. Art went sailing up, while the others struggled in vain. Arnold, however, introduced a variation to the right, which bypassed the lower overhang, and succeeded in joining Art on top. (When asked to repeat his performance for new arrivals, however, Art failed to make the original route and had to follow Arnold's variation.)

Next, Johnny diverted attention to a pitch offering a bit of exposure and requiring a variety of techniques. Inveigled by Arnold, most of the group, Johnny, Duncan, Walter and Bunky, among others, ascended this with a proper display of contortions, but with overwhelming success. Walter, Peg, Bunky, Hans and Mary made their separate ways up a climb that involved a very slippery take-off and a Mummery crack at the top, full of poison ivy vines. Walter, Peg and Mary were especially attracted to this climb because of their affinity for poison ivy.

By noon the sun shone warmly, and the group ate lunch leisurely and comfortably. In the afternoon, there was some self-belay climbing by Charlie. Art and Arnold went upstream scouting for rock problems, found some, and induced several others to follow them on some higher exposures.

Afterwards, the group met at Charlie's, where they were entertained with good music and good food. The showing of Arnold's slides, taken last year in the Wind River Range, made a happy ending to a most enjoyable day.

February 4, 1951. Carderock, Maryland.

Sunny, cold weather over a weekend was such a surprise that the climbing group disintegrated into three units:

Breakfasters: Don Hubbard

Engineers: Arnold Wexler
Sterling King

Retrievers: Art Lembeck

Chris Scoredos

Roger Foster

Peg Keister

Johnny Reed

Roger Foster, Jr.

Jim Bullard

Ray Moore

Sam Browne

Don deserted us after breakfast (a nice feat if you can do it!) at the Hot Shoppe, bound for the less transparent mysteries of glass at the Bureau of Standards.

The engineers went directly to Carderock and speedily had Oscar performing his nonchalant leaps from above the belaying platform. Those who had not caught high falls before did not seem at all impressed by Arnold's assurances that with a dynamic belay, a fall from 15 feet above the belayer could be held as easily as one of three feet. Practice, and dynamometer readings, gave assurance to the belayers, and no doubt to others who would lead their ropes in the future.

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Thanks are also due Ellen and Lowell Bennett for printing the heading and to Tom Culverwell for designing it.

UPS AND DOWNS (continued)

The retrievers were in search of the carabiner left several weeks before in the top piton of the Quaking Aspen climb downstream on the Virginia side of Chain Bridge. Crossing the bluffs over the climb was an interesting problem without crampons or nails -- bramanis just weren't the thing for the solid coat of frozen sleet on the hills. Two rappels using two 120 ft. nylons tied together and looped around trees, brought the three climbers and one carabiner to the foot of the cliff. Picking a way over frozen spume tossed ashore by the food-high Potomac was an added attraction. (Ed. The joke was on Art. He thought he was retrieving one of his own precious carabiners. Imagine his surprise, after all the work attached to recovering the snap link, to discover that same belonged to Arnold Wexler.)

The retrievers continued on to Carderock for lunch and joined the engineers for more practice falls.

An additional unit of our intrepid Mountaineers was discovered on the way out from the climbing area:

Skaters: Jack Wilson "Stimmy" Stimson Johnny Meenehan

The canal was frozen over in many spots and had attracted at least those observed by this reporter.

* * * * *

The Sierra Club has published its list of proposed outings for the coming summer. In case you are interested, dates and general areas are listed here. Further information may be obtained from literature at Trail Club Headquarters.

HIGH TRIP: (1) McGee Creek, Silver Pass, Mono Recesses. July 8-21.
(2) Mono Pass, Bear Creek headwaters, Hutchinson Meadow. July 22-Aug. 4.
(3) Piute Pass, Evolution Country, Bishop Pass. Aug. 5-18.

SADDLE TRIP: Bishop Pass to Mt. Whitney. About Aug. 20-Sept. 1.

BASE CAMP: Shadow Creek, below Lake Ediza. (1) July 1-14; (2) July 15-28
(3) July 29-Aug. 11; (4) Aug. 12-25.

KNAPSACK TRIPS: (1) Giant Forest, Milestone, Cedar Grove. July 8-21.
(2) Lake Chelan back country, Cascades of northern Washington.
August 6-17.

All of the trips, with the exception of the second Knapsack Trip, are in the Sierra Nevada of California.

* * * * *

Note: First poison ivy case reported this year - Peg Keister.

Contracted: The narrow chimney downstream from Peg's Progress.

Remedy: Don't jam in the crack - use a layback!