



Up Rope

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

1916 Sunderland Place N. W. Washington 6, D. C.

FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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COMING EVENTS

March 13 - Exploration in the South Maharrni Mountains, Northwest Territory by Dick Shamp - Time: 8:00 PM - Place: Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Appel, 3365 Runnymede Place, N.W. WO-6-1768 - Directions: From Chevy Chase Circle go east (toward Barnaby) on Western Avenue. 3 blocks to Runnymede Place.

Film Committee Meetings- 14 and 28 Feb.

The main business covered was agreement on a tentative scenario, with discussion of various filming spots. The film will be largely concerned with the dynamic belay, but will include other safety practices. The scenario was rehashed at the 28 Feb. meeting and a rehearsal on 8 March at Carderock was decided upon. On Sunday, 1 March, Oscar and his accessories was given a few practice falls. Next scheduled meeting before the filming begins will be 9 March. Filming is scheduled to start on 15 March at Carderock.

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WE CLIMBED THE TOWER

by Jan Conn

There were five climbers gathered at the Devils Tower campground that evening, but three of them seemed remarkably calm. It was only Jane Showacre and I who were too excited to get to sleep that night. Moreover, we were the ones who had to get up at 3:30 in the morning, while Herb and the Karchers lay abed. There ain't no justice.

We wanted to get an early start for two reasons -- to avoid the hot sun as long as possible, and more important to get past the first few difficult pitches (or be turned back by them) before too large an audience accumulated below.

We sneaked out of camp a little before four, clutching our hardware so it wouldn't jingle. There was already one eager tourist ahead of us on the trail. As we scrambled up over the talus and traversed the base of the rock we began to wonder whatever had put the idea in our heads.

I for one couldn't let Herb get ahead of me. He had sneaked up the Tower last summer while I was in Washington, and I was fed up with his teasing about having been up Devils Tower one more time than I had. I fervently hoped that Herb would be biting his fingernails as he watched from the bottom.

Jane and I both liked the idea of making a manless climb, to prove to ourselves that it was not the men we climbed with who "took us up", but that we were fairly capable climbers ourselves. Devils Tower has, for some reason, a reputation which makes any climber want to try it, and Jane was no exception. We thought this would be a good place to try our manless climb.

As we had known each other for five or six years, we felt confidence in each other's ability to climb and accept an equal amount of responsibility. Jane had just spent four weeks climbing in Canada with Pim and Ken Karcher, who would be watching our climb along with Herb.

The climb itself went smoothly, and the only times we wished we had a man along were to carry our pack up some of the tougher pitches. We found too that most of the pitons were placed by someone a foot taller than either of us, so we were inclined to climb past the delicate spots before reaching the piton intended to protect them. But there are advantages in being small. As Jane remarked after pounding in a piton half an inch or so, "It might not hold one of those six-foot heavyweights, but it's good enough for us".

We spent almost two hours on top, taking pictures, eating lunch, and cussing the flying ants who have their own form of welcome for Devils Tower climbers. The heat really struck us on the way down, and when we reached the bottom we were a hot sweaty sight for the group of thirty odd (that's what I said) tourists who were waiting with wide eyes and clicking cameras.

We made the first manless ascent of Devils Tower, but we feel somehow that instead of bringing glory to ourselves we have only detracted from Devils Tower's reputation as a climb. When asked if the climb was now an easy day for a lady, we could only reply, "It could be, but we didn't find it so easy!"

I WATCHED THEM CLIMB DEVILS TOWER

By Pim Karcher - Himp's Scroward

News Writer

WITH THE ALL-GIRL CLIMBING TEAM, Devils Tower, July 16 - There were five climbers gathered at the Devils Tower campsite that night. I was one of the three who was able to sleep.

Sometime around 6:30 in the morning, Ken and I strolled over the trail to a group of rocks to join Herbie at his vantage point. Herbie, it should be explained, had a very worried look on his face. Could be he was worried that he would no longer be able to tease Jan about his making more ascents of DT than she?

We chose the select rocks (those most flat and in the shade) and positioned ourselves so that there would be a minimum of neck stretching...we intended to be comfortable!...and began our vigil.

The early birds whom Jan and Jane saw when they arrived at the start of their climb had returned to the Park Museum and announced like 20th Century Paul Reveres "ready to ride and spread the alarm"...that the Tower was being climbed - by two WOMEN!

There came the thrill-seekers, the sight-seer; the curious, the amazed, the astonished, the strong, the weak, the brave, the frightened, the imperturbable--- and the hungry. A family of three were munching on cookies - they had not even taken time to have breakfast. Before many minutes had past, there was "STANDING ROOM ONLY!"

Part I - The Ascent. Your reporter caught bits of conversation from the fascinated on-lookers and these are herewith revealed for the very first time.

...Man to his wife: "Get a shady spot and gaze upon the beauty of the women climbers on the rock".

...See, they started the climb there, by that leaning column that looks just like a Tootsie Roll.

...How will they ever get down?

...What if they break a leg---who will go up to bring them down?

...Why don't they wear red shirts so we can see them better?

...Now why would a woman want to do a thing like that?

...That her there looks like a him.

...When you can see both their feet at once, that's not good.

...Do they cut steps in the rock? (Then it was explained that they use pitons, the usual question was, "Are they made of iron." The reply, "Yes, they are." brought the comment, "They must be awfully strong to be able to pound one of them into the rock." Your reporter didn't press the conversation to find out if they meant the pitons or the gals. An amusing note: Everyone kept referring to the pitons as "pegs.")

...Comment from a very fat woman to the Park Warden, "They ought to climb up this side (pointing to the sheer face opposite the Park Museum) so I wouldn't have to walk all the way around over there."

...You can hear them but I don't see them--oh! there they are. They're on top!

Part II - Lunch Time. The majority of the people walked back to the Museum and sat on the benches in front, looking at the top of the Tower. Jan and Jane obligingly came over very close to the edge and waved. The Warden began telling the group about a man who had parachuted to the top of the Tower from an airplane. A woman who got in on the tail end of the story looked bewildered and asked, "Is that what's going to get them down?" We all laughed and that only added to her confusion. She finished with, "You mean they have to climb down?"

Passing one group who were staring at the top of the Tower, I heard, "It might be birds up there walking around." Answer given by member of group: "Oh no! if they were birds they wouldn't be walking so cautious."

While we were walking back to our select rocks, a woman ran up and then, as if the climbing were being offered as part of a scheduled daily event which the Park Service conducted, asked, "What time do they start down?" - consulting her watch as she asked the question.

Some people who had remained frozen to their spots were getting hungry by the time we arrived back, but to the statement, "It's time to eat." came the reply, "Who can think of food when you're watching something like this?"

It was 12:05 when the girls started down.

Part III - The Descent. There were a series of "Ahs" and "Ohs" as the gals reached the skyline to begin the descent. The conversation ran:

...I just saw them -- holding each other's hands.

...Do they handle the ropes themselves?

...This is really a spectator sport - sure is more exciting than a bull fight.

...One man announced to the group, "Any man who has any conceit about his own sex should just come up here and watch these two girls."

...I wonder if she'll have to cook the dinner when she gets down? (I studied Herb's face to get the answer to that question. He just smiled.)

...One spectator, too frozen to the spot to leave, said, "Well, it looks like we won't get to Cheyenne tonight." Another said, "We better go. We want to get to Yellowstone." The reply to that was, "I'd rather miss Yellowstone than miss this."

Probably the most frequent and oft repeated questions of the day concerned the girls themselves:

....What time did they start up?

....How tall are they?

....How much do they weigh?

....How old are they?

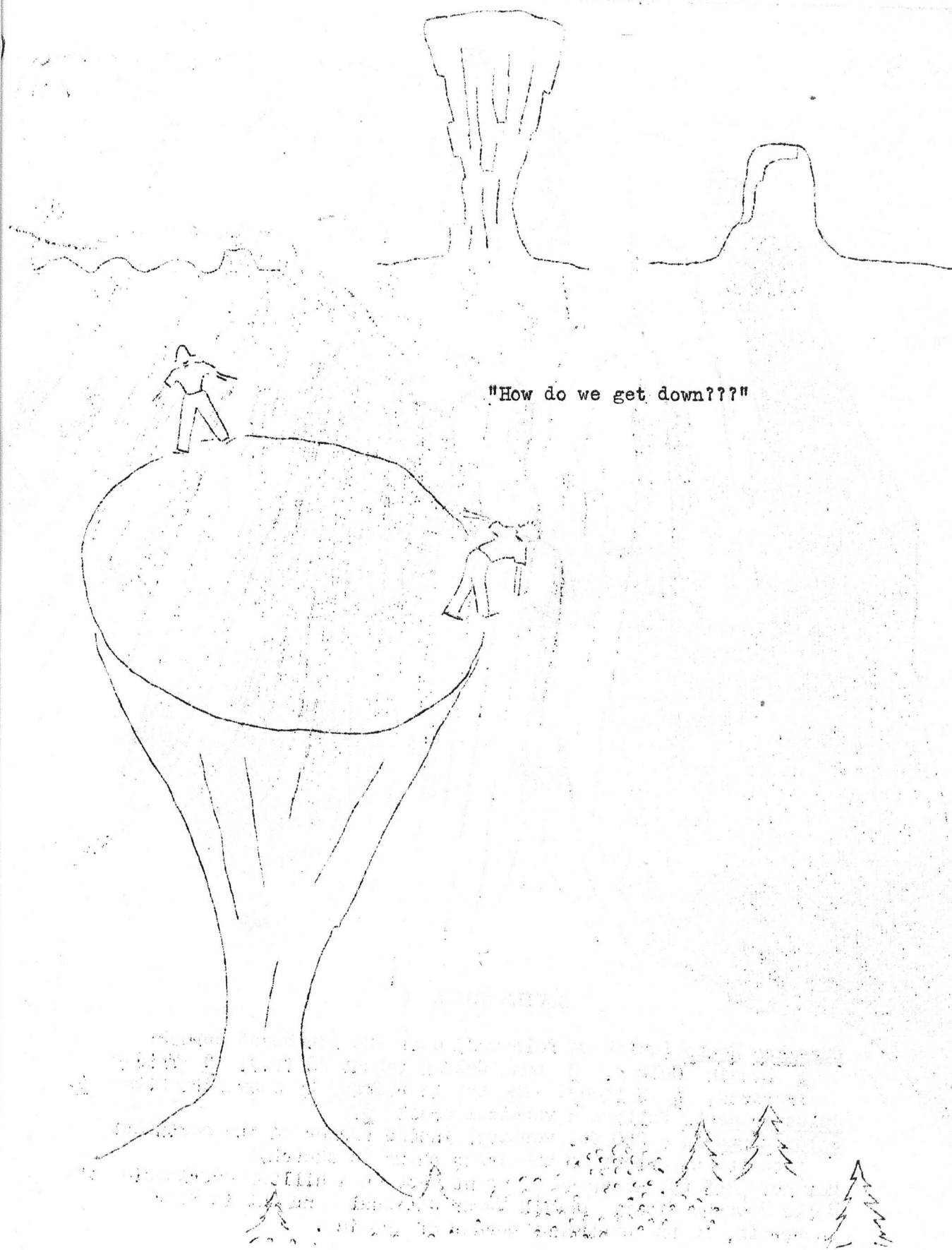
It would have required an adding machine to keep statistics on the number of times stationary rocks high up on the Tower were mistaken for human beings (our all-girl team), and the number of hallucinations in the United States on this day must have been doubled by those occurring at Devils Tower. Everyone was reporting objects moving which were far removed from the actual climbing route of Jan and Jane.

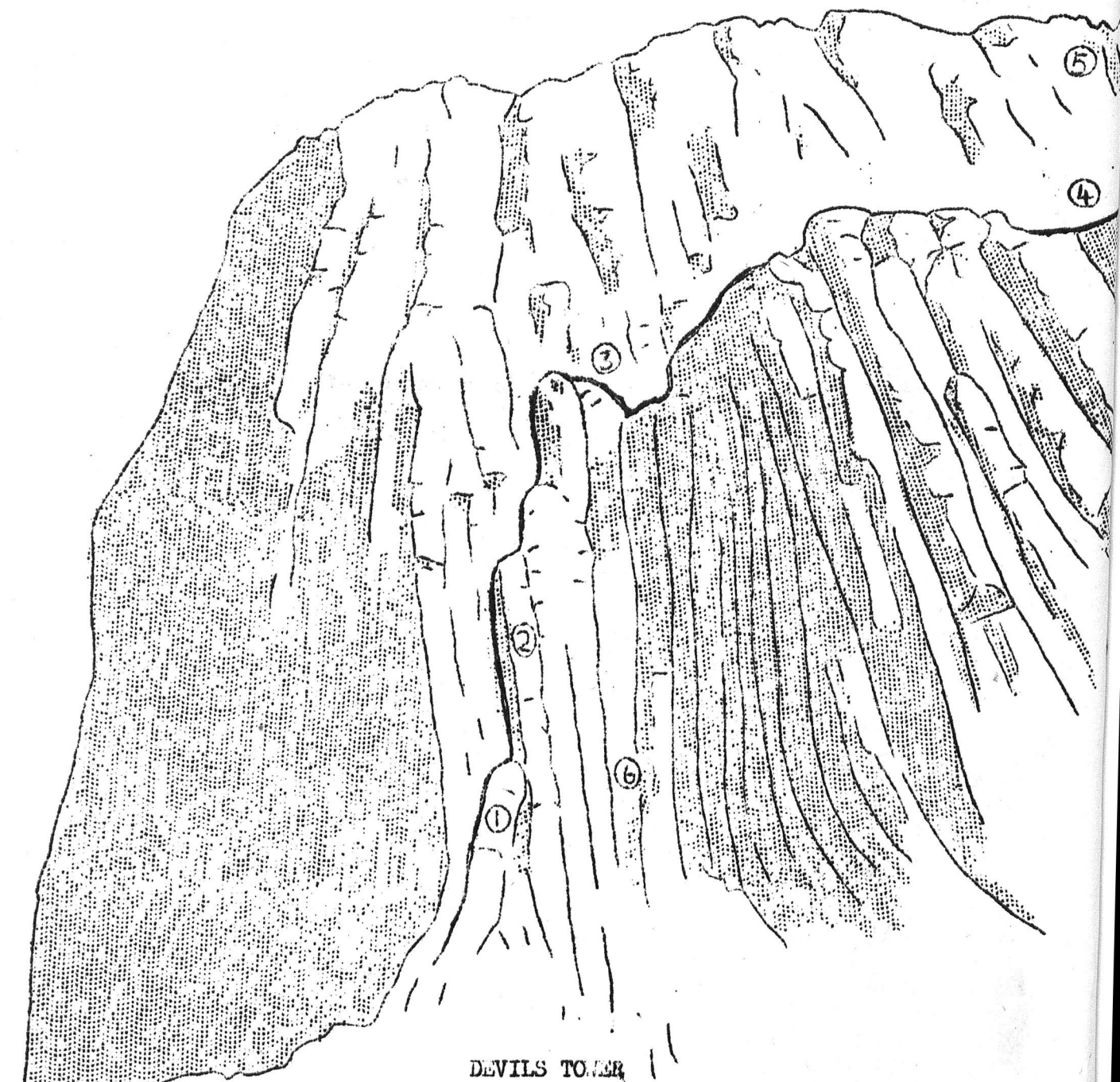
Herb, Ken and Pim, the self-appointed hocklers, left the crowd and climbed up the rocks to meet the girls at the leaning column (the Tootsie Roll referred to by one of the members of the gallery) and to cheer them on to the finish. Jan was requested to yodel, and after a delightful Swiss yodel, the crowd (which numbered somewhere in the neighborhood of 50) applauded and shouted "More." Jan complied. More applause.

The girls had done proud by themselves. As they walked back to the Museum, the crowd separated and formed two columns, one on each side of the trail and the gals had to walk between them. There was a lot of activity around the museum and Jan and Jane were asked to pose for pictures. They were certainly obliging. They were hot and tired and thirsty, and actually unappreciative of all this sudden attention they were receiving. Like Garbo, they wanted to be alone. However, their smiles were not deceiving. Success, and happiness of that success, was written all over their faces.

The last bit of conversation your reporter caught as we wended our way back to the campsite was in a very serious vein and departed from the usual amusing remarks of the afternoon..."I'll bet once you've climbed something like that you've got the courage to face anything."

There were five climbers gathered at the Devils Tower campsite that night. All of them were able to sleep -- two particularly soundly.





DEVILS TOWER

Durrance Route (which we followed) near the southeast corner:

1 Leaning Column, 2 Long Column (about 80 ft.), 3 Tricky Traverse, 4 Balcony. The top is reached by easy scrambling 5.

Weissner Route follows a vertical crack 6.

Soler Route is a 250 ft. vertical inside corner on the northeast face (to the right of the areas shown in sketch).

Height: 865 ft. above an apparent base on a hilltop overlooking the Belle Fourche River. Devils Tower National Monument is near Moorcroft, in the northeast corner of Wyoming.