



FOUNDED BY  
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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### COMING EVENTS

- December 20      Sunday -- ROCKCLIMBING MEETING, 6:30 p.m., Cabin John Field House -- be sure to eat supper first. Turn right at the Recreational center just beyond the Cabin John Bridge. Gil Blinn will show his Mt. Ranier slides and Florence Meigs will take us on a back packing trip through Olympic National Park. We hope to do some folk dancing afterwards, so if you have any favorite records, bring them.
- December 20      HERZOG ISLAND, Maryland. If anyone has a boat, bring it along for the short ferry across from Carderock.
- December 27      ECHO CLIFFS, Virginia.
- December 31 --  
- January 3      THE HERMITAGE, Pennsylvania. If you plan to go on all or part of this trip, call Bob Adams at Cherry 8- 4523. We will hike if the weather is too cold to climb.

\* \* \* \* \*

### EQUIPMENT MEETING

On December 2, at PATC Headquarters, Art Lembeck discussed equipment for hiking, climbing and camping, and if you think you already know everything, you should have been there! He showed us everything from tents and sleeping bags down to the new parkas made of ventile cloth. This material swells when it gets wet, but yet is vapor permeable. We even saw some "gum" rubber soles in vibram roccia. Art is Equipment Chairman for the PATC, and if you don't "know", -- ask him, -- he does.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Mountaineering Committee meets each Sunday at 8 a.m. at Howard Johnsons, Western and Wisconsin Avenues. Be there early if you plan to have breakfast with us but don't telephone the restaurant.

ROCK CLIMBERS MEETING

On Tuesday evening, December 1st, the climbers, snug in the Glascocks' living room spent a year in Antarctica with Harry Francis of the National Science Foundation watching Seabees and penguins, observing scientific research, and shoveling snow. As "logistics officer" for our Antarctic research staff, Harry has wintered over at Little America (during the IGY) and is scheduled to return there next year.

We flew to Little America via New Zealand, with a brief glance at the New Zealand Alps, and the Naval Air Facility at McMurdo Sound, where we traded our wheeled plane for one on skis. At McMurdo Sound we saw the huts of Shackleton and Scott, destined to be restored as historical monuments, and went on to Little America on the Ross Ice Shelf, pausing briefly to visit a scientific "traverse party" making a 4 month Seismic sounding trip across the ice farther inland.

At Little America, we inspected the equipment and vehicles outside, and finally found the front door to the building complex, still partly buried under the previous winter's snow. Inside, we visited the cramped quarters and the mess hall. We looked over the biologist's shoulder, kibitzed a four day monopoly game, and got acquainted with the weather reporting radio service (one of Little America's prime functions) and the ham station which would be the ears and voice to home during the mail-less winter.

Then, the traverse party returned from its summer trek, the last ship left for home, and, one day, the sun went down for good, leaving us with the long winter night to decode the data from the summers studies and endless hours to kill in more Monopoly or bridge or poker, making the quarters more habitable, or perhaps even a "dramatic" show. The temperature outside went to 100 below, and the only people who went out were the aurora specialist and those detailed to dig out oil drums to refuel our power plant.

We scarcely noticed that the sky was growing brighter, and then someone noticed that the sun had sneaked over the horizon. It paused a moment and then slid down again, but winter was over. A few weeks later the word came, "Your replacement is coming in." We grabbed the bag that had been ready under the bunk for months and headed for the airstrip.

Harry Francis is a fine photographer and the audience was entranced. We saw his Karakoram slides several years ago -- perhaps we'll be fortunate enough to see his Alaskan pictures some time next year before his return to Antarctica.

"Blondie" Worrell

\* \* \* \* \*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

John Christian writes that he plans to go to Europe this summer, and John Ackerman, that he is certainly enjoying that first year at college. He'll be home for Christmas so we will see him then.

Chairman Bob Adams tells us that Blondie has now climbed Herbie's Horror, and maybe now it will be as popular as the Spiderwalk.

Letters to the editor continued:

Editor, UP ROPE,

Reference: Quote from Chuck's Article in November "UP ROPE": "Good Heavens -- didn't the other two know about his coffee? Ed."

Yeah, we knew about his coffee when we signed him on as expedition cook but we do not carry coffee on our trips.

What you might even more appropriately have mentioned are those misshapen horrors that Chuck likes to ingest in lieu of food. For legal reasons I will here refer to them as "Skinny Jameses". They are alleged to belong to the sausage genus. They are sold in beer parlors for the purpose of making folks drink more beer. If you eat them without the beer chaser your throat becomes a livid, aching tube, holes are burned in your stomach and scar tissue eventually fills your intestines. They are identical in appearance with Pittsburgh stogies but taste worse. None of us has tried smoking one. Donald, of all people, developed quite a fondness for the miserable things.

The opinions expressed here are those of the writer; I'll bet he has lots of company in them.

Respectfully,

Pete

Mary Vincett sends in this poem which is self Explanatory. Thurmont, I believe is the scene of action.

AFTER COMING OFF A CLIMB  
FOR THE FIFTH TIME

Climbs that I would approach queasily  
They negotiate so easily  
Going up the center route  
Using footholds quite minute.  
Why is it that gravity  
Has a stronger pull on me?

The face that they climb breezily  
I find on close inspection  
Has, alas, at least for me  
A much too smooth complexion.  
For I require, in fact, demand  
a platform upon which to stand  
And bucket holds for either hand.

Mary Vincett

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Several of us decided that the time had come for another trip to Schoolhouse, so here it is, 1959 style.

### TO THE END OF THE LINE

It was a dark and chilly Thanksgiving Night as we slithered up the muddy road toward Schoolhouse Cave, four Adamses and the dog in a car piled high with ropes, food, and duffel. A welcome sight greeted us at the last bend, Joe Faint's familiar gray Plymouth. We announced our arrival in good voice and heard Joe's sepulchral reply from the depths of the cave. Soon a small flickering light emerged from the darkness; then we all set to work moving the equipment into the Sleeping Room. As the first to arrive we selected the level area at the back for our sleeping bags, fixed a cup of bouillon, and turned in. Sleep came with difficulty, for the night was filled with strange clattering and scratching noises. A flashlight revealed that Frisky was checking on the rat situation. We had no objection to that, but what if she should slide over the edge into the Entrance Room in the dark? Worry, worry! Apparently, though, dogs really can see in the dark. Frisky lived in the cave some 72 hours, most of the time by herself, without mishap or apparent loss of morale.

Bright and early in the morning Chuck Wettling and Jim Shipley came breezing in, having spent a healthful night outside in the tent. After what seemed hours of cooking and getting organized, we set off after them for the Jumping-Off Place with eight or ten ropes and the usual small packs of lunch, water, carbide, and matches. Once down the first rappel we encountered a real caver, Tom Pierce, who for lack of better employment was busy with a wire brush cleaning off the "fool's names" which "oft appear in public places". We were most fortunate to have run into Tom, for we persuaded him to lead us up the dirt face to the Judgement Seat, our objective for the first day. The last vertical pitch is a bit unnerving to rock climbers, provided as it is with loose and crumbly holds for both hands and feet. Thanks to Tom, all eight of us arrived without incident on top of that large and comfortable chockstone, where we had lunch and watched Tom polish off a few more names. It was then 5 o'clock, and not wishing to be late for dinner, we edged off the Judgement Seat and headed for camp. It had been a short day, but some of us dragged perceptibly going up the wire ladder Sayre Rodman had obligingly left for us on the Mud Slope.

It was lonesome again that night, Chuck and Jim having gone outside to sleep. Alan Talbert and Sam Goldin arrived about midnight, we were told, and Betty Johnson and Art Andraitis about 3 a.m. (Where can you go folk dancing in West Virginia?)\* We were impolite enough not to get up and fix them a bedtime snack, but we did let them know when it was time to get up the next morning.

We were away again about noon on Saturday; Chuck, Jim, Joe, Sam, and the Adamses in one party; Betty, Alan, and Art in the other. Those of us in the first group were determined to go all the way to the back of the cave. We reached the Judgement Seat in very good time: Jim and Joe, John and I by the Angel's Roost; Chuck, Sam, Kate, and Bobby via the dirt slope. Then we scrambled up to the entrance to the Hodag Room, where we had lunch in close quarters and high spirits. We scooted across the Hodag Room in rapid succession

\*No fooling -- It was raining and dark and the cave was hard to find. Ed.



and rappelled into the Thunderbolt Room. This is where progress ground to a halt. Chuck was the only member of the party who had ever been that far, and that in 1954. At his suggestion we rappelled 20 feet into a large circular wall on our right called the Avalanche Pit. From here a window looks into the depths of the Thunderbolt Room, and an ancient wire ladder in an advanced state of decay points the way down. We made up a long rope ladder and dropped it over the side, but it lacked 40 or 50 feet of reaching the bottom. A long conference ensued, after which Jim climbed back out of the Avalanche Pit and rappelled from the chockstone into the Thunderbolt Room. Once down he was able to arrange the rope ladder so that a 20-foot climb brought him back to where we stood. We had been trying to reach the bottom of the Pendulum Pit, which is best left as an exercise for the student.

Leaving Kate and Bobby at the top of the Avalanche Pit, five of us followed Jim down into the Thunderbolt Room again. Chuck led down one dirt face and up another one, nearly vertical and quite exposed. After this we crawled up a winding passage between fallen rocks, suddenly emerging into the open on what seemed very like a "summit ridge". It was good to stand on large boulders with the spacious Great Gallery ahead. There even seemed to be a breath of fresh air, and one could see it was a fine clear night, with thousands of stars about to break through a high thin overcast. Then we came to the last dirt wall where the sign says "Pay Your Gas Bills Here". As we signed the register, Sam generously distributed Hershey bars to all hands, somewhat in the manner of Paul Petzoldt, who is said to produce cans of beer at the summit of the Grand Teton.

The return trip was uneventual. We overtook Betty, Alan, and Art at the Nick of Time. Lacking a ladder, Chuck led up the Mud Slope in fine style and brought 11 tired people out of the cave in remarkably good time. The last man was over the edge at 6:30 Sunday morning. Then we ate a big pot of stew and dropped exhausted into the sack. All but Jim Shipley, who was still performing gymnastics and expounding the theory that one hour's sleep is plenty when the light went out.

Robert J. Adams

While the majority of "our gang" was cavorting about the upper level the intrepid trio of Talbert, Johnson, and Andraitis, chose the lower passage. After a cursory run over the Pancakes and through the Sand Room and Dome Room it was apparent that Jacobs Ladder and the Entrance room really did not meet. Thwarted in their attempt to sneak back early after an easy trip, their attention was diverted to the Ribfiddle and the mysterious Grind Canyon. Slipping through the Ribfiddle, dropping down Bennetts Well into the depths of the Grind Canyon went our heroes - leaving a rope of course for the way out is quite tricky. Once in the Grind Canyon it became apparent that it was aptly named - very narrow and tortuous. Tentative explorations to the west found that end of the Canyon in just a few yards. Side-slipping and crawling on his little old belly, Alan managed to negotiate 300 or so feet to the east - the end was not reached. However, since Alans moral support was stuck on his belly, about 200 feet back he decided to return. Despite lost pieces of skin, ripped pants and parkas all of our heroes made it back safely.

Result: No large room found and further crews are advised to take little people and bat chasers. In spite of some talk, we don't think it necessary for the Morals Committee to investigate.

Art Andraitis

THOUGHTS ON DESCENDING INTO SCHOOLHOUSE CAVE  
FOR THE FIRST TIME

For weeks I had resisted. Crawling through tortuous spiky passages lubricated with icy water and clay did not appeal to my craving for the caviare life. Glissading down a mud slope; it sounded revolting and a trifle obscene. I am all for the salubrious bourgeois life and care not for the murky, miserable caves, and yet they kept on persuading me, coaxing me, wheedling me; proffering me helmets, lamps, carbide, sleeping bags, blankets, air mattresses. (No, not air mattresses - the cads.) Strangely, uncannily, I succumbed - bedevilled? My Thanksgiving Day weekend and I was petrified; so scared.

T'was at the very witching time of night when the gnome\* and the harpy\* descended through the mouth and up the gullet of this monstrous, petrified whale, stranded in some ancient pleistocene age and silted over with the carnage and catabolism of the centuries. Enshrouded in a veil of their own congealed breath, they met the main body of their party already cocooned for the night in the ante-chamber.

Many sleepless hours later (no air mattress - curses), I stood on the lip of the jumping off place staring into the Stygian darkness. I do not intend to give a description of my journey to the very end of the Great Gallery - and back, but instead to drop a few choice thoughts of my impressions. (That b..... editor; what an assignment.)\*

As Alan and I decided, one has to be prepared to sacrifice comfort for the sake of adventure and I suppose the Tom Sawyer in us never grows old, only infirm. Climbing in this cave is an adventure especially to my untutored eyes, but if I ever return I would like to be less intent on reaching the very end of the cave and would prefer to have more leisure to get off the beaten track, if that is possible. There are one or two suggestive shadows which aroused my curiosity. To explore unknown ground is very exciting for some of us. I suppose it is the urgings of an intense but disguised ambition that spurs us on. We wish to conquer - fear? giants? We desire the fame in posterity of giving our name to some spot - stature? immortality?

The cave to me has its own particular form of beauty and I was particularly impressed by the Thunderbolt Room and the Great Gallery. The immensity, the chaos, the curious and intriguing forms - all so very awesome and one feels perhaps more than one does in climbing above ground that one is intimately in contact, at grips with a nature that presents a challenge and a rich reward too.

Finally one cannot help but be impressed by the first explorers of the cave. Those climbers who went down the mud slope for the first time in the early forties and then up to the top of the Judgment Seat have all my respect and admiration.

Sam Goldin

\* (Who else but Alan and Sam.) Ed.

\* (The word left out by Sam is undoubtedly blasted. Ed.)

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