

FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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COMING EVENTS

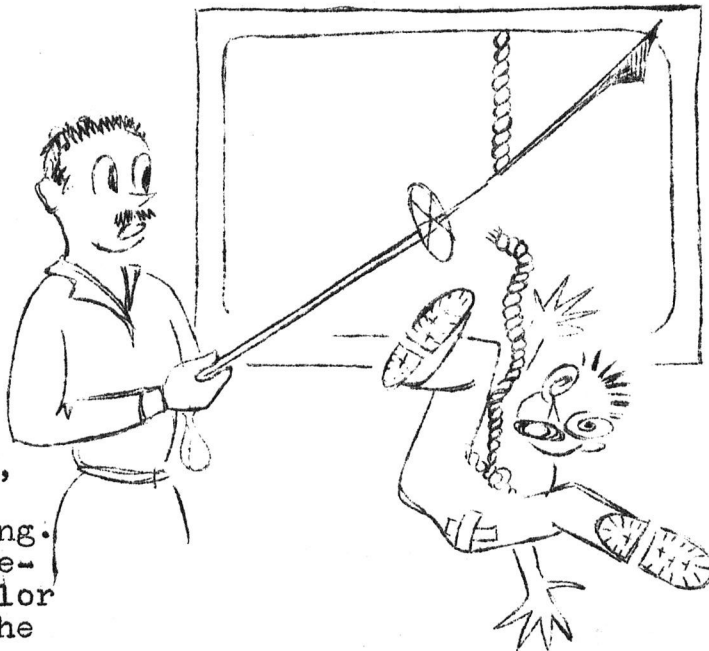
- NOVEMBER 5 CARDEROCK, Md., No Oscar practice.
- 10-12 SENECA, West Virginia, Camp at Spruce Knob, Food
by individual car.
- 19 WOLF ROCK, Thurmont, Md., Call Harold Kramer,
HA 2-7942 for information, extra car space,
and rides.
- 26 HERZOG ISLAND, Md.
- DECEMBER 3 CARDEROCK, Md., No Oscar practice.

E D I T O R I A L

From time to time we hear rumors of dissension from the ranks of our readers which allude to sorrow or anger at the presumed passing of some favorite feature from the pages of UP ROPE. The Staff, and the Editor is grateful to it, works hard to produce each issue and sacrifices its scarce spare time for the fun of publishing our variable journal and spreading the mountaineering word. UP ROPE would be happy to carry many more features than it does, especially trip reports, but UP ROPE exists for the climbers and through the climbers. In other words, we would be happy to have more reports submitted, we have had some very entertaining columns come unsolicited in the mail--note the psychopathology study in this issue--but it is up to the subscribers to overcome their literary shyness. So, come around and see us sometime!

THE OCTOBER MEETING

Ray and Suzy Moore--he has climbed everything in this area, so now he builds boats--were hosts to the rock climbers' monthly meeting on October 25 which featured Arnold Wexler's account of an expedition to the Canadian Coast Range. Accompanied by Sterling Hendricks, Don Hubbard, and fellow photographer Pete Peterson, Arnold flew into the Ape Lake area north of Vancouver, British Columbia for a memorable four weeks of camping and climbing. The snowy mountain peaks and fine-looking glaciers shown in the color slides aroused the envy of all the 40-some mountaineers present for the meeting. For all of those who appreciate the virgin wilderness, Arnold presented a very informative and entertaining evening.



Needless to say, the mountain committee did a creditable job on the Moore's tasty refreshments.

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF ROCK-CLIMBERS OR THE REASONS WHY

ROCK-CLIMBERS HAVE UPS AND DOWNS

by Dr. Samson Goldin.

This is a very abstruse subject which has troubled the Establishment (the British social and political in-group, ED.) ever since Moses climbed Mount Sinai twice and Mahomet went to the Mountain. Jesus too had an association with a Mount, although Buddha preferred trees, but was probably a cloud-watcher. However, it is not my intention to impute that the motives of these honourable gentlemen were in any way similar to those of our latter-day climbers. I think that our modern purpose is better served if we turn, as I intend to do, to that modern Messiah, Sigmund Freud.

Now, Freud invented the Unconscious and the Oedipus Complex amongst other things, although I have no record of him as a mountaineer. Let us first examine the unconscious in relation to this human breed, the rock-climber. We all know that to get into the unconscious, one has to go "down" and we also all know that climbers are always trying to get "up" and the immediate assumption you, my readers, will make is that there should be some connection. But pause and think: climbers go "up", but they must come from "down" before they ever get to "up". Surely that must mean that they live in the "down" - unconscious and are

perpetually trying to get out - escape? Hence their need to be "up", poor folks.

However, let me bring to your attention another highly significant fact. In trying to get "up" the honour of the climber demands that he chose the most difficult route to the top - and so often he falls "down." Now this is what is called "ambivalence." He pretends he wants to be "up" and, indeed, he tries b very hard to be "up", but then he secretly also wants to be "down", although he would never admit it. The fact of the matter is, that he secretly loves his unconscious.

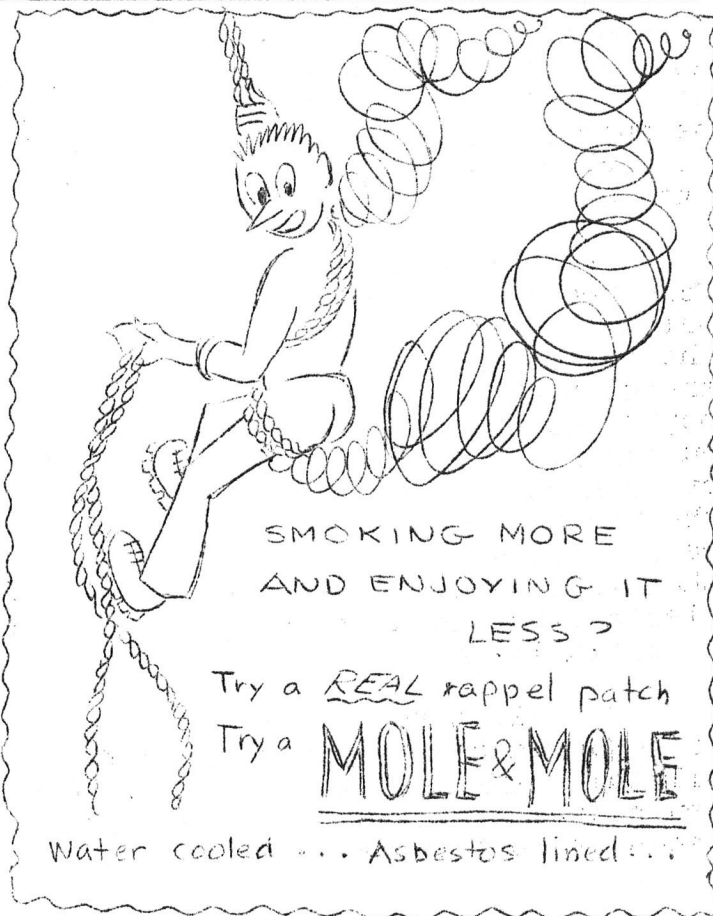
Now this startling revelation should explain a lot of hitherto incomprehensible behaviour of the rock-climber. Take for instance his notorious cloud-watching pass-time. In the light of our discovery this "activity" is seen to be the logical outcome of a conscious acceptance of the above mentioned ambivalence and the closest approach man has ever made to that blissful state of having his cake and eating it.

Then there is the very odd ceremonial tribal custom called, "Belay Practice with Oscar." It is not my intention here to describe the symbolic significance of the peculiar totem pole used; of the costume donned by the sitting figure who appears to be the initiate of the rites, or of the intricate dance with the rope of that person whom I take to be the high priest. I would like to bring to your attention however, the deep symbolic significance of the rites for the whole tribal group. There is the

This from Herb and Jan Conn:

A climbing friend of ours, John Wells, told us a wonderful Bob Mole type ad for rappel patches with the caption "Are you smoking more now but enjoying it less!" and a suitable sketch of a climber en rappel with smoke rising from the appropriate places. We send you this card in the hope that the idea finds its way into Up Rope.

So



rapt attention and anxiety of the group as Oscar (which is, of course, the highly stylised image of one of their major deities, no doubt related to Persephon of the ancient Greeks) is hoisted "up" into the sky and the satisfaction, release of anxiety and pleasure expressed as, hurtling rapidly "down", he is finally brought with toughing gentleness to rest on the ground. This repeated enactment of a safe coming "down", back to the unconscious, represents the whole group's attachment to and yearning for the unconscious. Their god is brought from the "up" to join them in the "down."

Finally, in this discourse of the unconscious desires and conflicts of the climber, I would ask you to attend to this peculiar practice called "rapelling." First, the derivation of the word is interesting. RAP'ELL (Obviously an alliteration of two Anglo-Saxon words and the first word, Asst ED.) I suggest, was originally "reap", to gain the benefits of, to partake of. But I will not belabour this rather controversial point and, instead turn to the activity. The climber clamours to reach the top and, ostensibly, he should wish to remain there, but we know that he prefers the bottom. (That is the unconscious and all the more carnal experiences and emotions of which it is compromised.) He could, in his descent, keep up the myth that he really enjoys climbing for its own sake and climb down but, no, in his anxiety to return to his more normal habit, he rapells, The conclusion is obvious.

I would like now to consider "Freud's" second discovery, the Oedipus Complex, in relation to rock-climbers. This term, as you know, alludes to Greek mythology and involves some rather uncivilized things of which, I trust, you all know. Essentially it deals with Mother-Son relationships and, at first sight, may be much more applicable to spelunkers than climbers and, indeed, it probably is, but I think it has some relevance to the latter even if they never venture underground.

In the original, Oedipus had to become king before he achieved his greatest desire. Now, climbers cannot become kings, but can try, strive in their particularly symbolic fashion to do the seemingly impossible. Thus, they stand out as unique amongst the plebians of the plains. They are as if endowed with abilities beyond the mortal ability to overcome gravity. They are super-human. Will they then not be acceptable to the mother? It has even been known for climbers actually to cry out "Mother" after they have achieved some particularly fine achievement and thus revealing their insight but, alas, this is more the exception than the rule. Unfortunately, most are ignorant of their secret wish, but continue to be driven by it, and climb and climb and climb again.

Now, I am sure that, by now, many of my original readers will have run in consternation away from the revelations I have, with all humility, laid before them, for I know what torment the truth can evince. However, in true evangelical spirit, I must needs press home my truths, no matter what the cost. To those

that are staying the course I say, "Have courage, I have but two more examples to add, proving the rôle of the Oedipus Complex in the essentially simple lives of the rock-climber. Bear with me."

If you will pardon my temerity, I will bring to your attention the structure and especially the shape of that mechanical aid, so called, of the climber called the piton which, as you know, is driven into the rock with such great gusto and exultation, and on which he trusts his life. Such an extraordinary ritual performed only by the leader signifies in magical fashion his claims to mother and the subservience of the other members of the team.

Of course, we must not ignore the group dynamics of the climbers, for theirs is a sub-culture which lays great stress on mutual protection. The repression of individual desires is reinforced by the powerful taboos in the group. For instance, every climber must have a rope tied to him so that, if he becomes overly blatant in seeking the secret prize of them all, the other members of the group can pull him down. This is the special duty of that functionary called the "belayer," Be-lay'-er: the name signifies the responsibility. If the climber abides by the rules, he is caught, if not..... Another example is that of the lead climb where only one person is allowed to move at a time so that the other can scrutinize him to make sure that he takes the most difficult path available and does not cheat by holding on to the rope or the carabiner. If he does, retribution comes quickly, usually in the form of a loose rock, or a yank on the rope when he is off balance. Justice in this culture is inexorable and fast, hence we find a great deal of brotherly love in the group. The errant ones have been eliminated by evolutionary natural selection.

On this note I would like to end this treatise with the hope that my erudition has brought enlightenment to my remaining readers, and with this message to the world at large. Rock-climbing produces brotherly love. Let the leaders of the world rope together.

Hermitage trip, 27-29 October.

The annual Halloween trip to the Hermitage was enhanced this year by near perfect weather and an outstanding stew dinner prepared by Al Barbour and Alice Lane. The Adams were there with their new large economy-size dog, Penny and she immediately set out to make friends with everyone, especially the editor of UP ROPE so that he would be certain to print her name. The climbers did climb and the Mezzanine, and the Hoverhang, and the SwissGuide all were well worked over. Betty Johnson, Ron Bell, Sam Stulberg, Alan Talbert, Marty Maricle, Chuck Wettling, and Karl Edler and his son Fritz were also present.

EDITOR: Hardy Hargreaves

Art by Alice Lane, Production, Chuck Wettling.

Subscriptions: Send one dollar for twelve issues to the Editor at the PATC clubhouse, address on page one.