



FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036

Vol. XXI No. 3

UP ROPE

Page 1

March 1966

COMING EVENTS

- *March 6 Carderock, Maryland
LEADER: Phil Eddy - 942-4231
- March 13 Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland
LEADER: Bob Adams - 292-1340
- March 16 PATC Headquarters - Business Meeting, 8:00pm (See p. 6 for details)
- March 19-20 Caving near Williamsville, Virginia
for information and reservations contact Ed Goodman-
931-2912 - deadline for reservations is March 15
- March 27 Wolf Rock, Maryland
LEADER: Phil Eddy - 942-4231
- *April 3 Carderock, Maryland
LEADER: Rich Hall

There will be a trip to the Shawangunks in New York in April -- for more details see next Up Rope.

*All those interested in dynamic belay practice should contact Chuck Wettling (843-6217) to make reservations before Carderock Sundays.

Sunday meeting place is the Howard Johnson's Restaurant at Wisconsin and Western Avenues. Climbers leave for the rocks at 8:30 a.m.; come earlier for breakfast. Climbing lasts all day and groups of climbers usually stop for supper on the way home. Bring lunch and water and wear suitable clothing to climb in (if the Canal is frozen bring ice skates). Any interested person, whether PATC member or not, is invited to join in the Section's activities. If you're completely new to climbing you are invited to learn to climb well and belay capably and enjoyably, or, if

you already know a kletterschuh from a chimney, you are invited to enjoy using and improving your current climbing skills in the company of like-minded people. If you arrive late at HoJo's, check behind the southeast drainpipe for any change in the day's climbing activities.

For further information about the Mountaineering Section and/or its climbing activities, call:

Chairman: Phil Eddy (942-4231)	or	Vice-Chairman: Ed Goodman (931-2912)
4500 Strathmore Avenue		5345 Sanger Avenue
Garrett Park, Maryland		Alexandria, Va.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

On Saturday, January 29, the Section held its annual elections with a good turnout, despite the "blizzard of '66." Phil Eddy and Ed Goodman were elected Chairman and Vice-chairman respectively of the group for the ensuing year. Although Tom Blevins had been nominated for Vice-chairman, it was found that he was ineligible since he was not a member of PATC (and it was therefore prohibited by our Constitution). The nominating committee apologized for its error, and then the meeting was adjourned to the Old Stein for a bit of German cheer.

Pinky Wheatley

CARDEROCK, MARYLAND -- 6 February 1966

Don Hubbard (HoJo's)	Don Stemper	Bob, Kate, Bobby Adams
Lynn North	Art Wilder	Rich Hall
Dave & Joan Templeton	Ed & Syvone Goodman	Merv Oleson
and Rollie & Debbie	Phil & Bobby Eddy	Tal Bielefeldt
John & Linda Reed	Mark Carpenter	Barry Wallen
Frank Osterhoudt	Penny Pierce	Joe Nolte
Joe & Dave Ney	Chuck Wettling	Tom Blevins
Jim Dowis	Glen Cannon	Tony Gray
Tim Schoechle	Maggie Teel	Chris Scoredos
Bob Armstrong	Bill Hottell	

Today, a full week after the blizzard which left this area with an official 21 inches of snow, the snow was still about knee-deep in the Carderock area, and the Potomac River was frozen over solidly enough to permit skating and walking across.

The featured climbs of the day were ones which are ordinarily inaccessible because they have only water beneath them. The location is at the very end of the formation or rocks. Skating proved to be a rather popular diversionary activity. Also,

there were a couple of exploratory trips to Herzog's Island directly opposite Carderock. On the far side of this island, facing the Virginia shore, is a long series of cliffs similar to Carderock but with little dry land at the base. Most of the potential climbs resembled Nubble Face or Jan's Face. This area was popular two decades ago but has not been used in recent years. However, John Reed has offered to make a couple of canoes available if we would like to schedule climbing at Herzog's Island in the future.

Phil Eddy

DEVIATIONIST TRIP -- HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

19-22 February 1966

Over the long Washington's Birthday week-end Maggie Teel, Rick Banning, and myself traveled the limestone mountains of northern Alabama in the company of Jennifer Wise, Bruce Morgan, and Dave Newson of the Potomac Speleological Club and National Capitol Grotto. Our purpose was to visit some of the remarkable limestone solution pit caves of that region, principally Fern Cave, the deepest pit in the United States with a free drop of over 400 feet.

Our first visit was to the Never Sink on the Mud Creek Quadrangle. A short hike up a talus-strewn and brush-covered mountain brought us suddenly to a hole over 75 feet across. A great cataract leapt from the opposite side and plunged free to the scree 200 feet below. As we rappelled, the soft, moss-covered walls retreated to empty blackness. The walls at the bottom of this chamber yielded not a single passage, but the water rushed quickly to hide in the talus floor.

The next day, the cloudless morning saw us, rope-laden, hiking up the rocky trail to the top of Nat Mountain on the Paint Rock Quadrangle. A shallow wooded sink sported the last remnants of its carpet of fern from former seasons, which gives the cave its name. A pleasant 30 foot waterfall showed us the entrance to a winding stream passage. We followed this rugged gallery for several hundred feet to find "surprise pit." The ceiling remained a few feet above our heads and the walls only widened themselves to another 20 feet but the thundering, swirling mist and blackness at our feet offered no hope of floor or foothold. With Rick as my belayer and a pocketful of bolt hangers, I led two short pitches, traversing along the rotten, mud-coated wall to a ledge which we hoped was sufficiently far from the waterfall. Anchoring fixed ropes and our 600-foot goldline rappel rope to Raul studs, I sat down to watch the incredible spectacle as 4 members of our party descended. They escaped my powerful spotlight into the swirling mist about 200 feet below. The pit widened to several acres at the bottom, and the blowing storm was inescapable.

An hour of prussiking brought each member back to my ledge and midnight found us again on the slopes of Nat Mountain. The mountains have long offered strange and beautiful sights to those who care to venture into them. The hills of Alabama are no exception.

Tim Schoechle

Replies were received from Paul Bradt and Jan and Herb Conn in response to our letters advising them of honorary membership in the Mountaineering Section. We thought you might be interested in reading their comments, and their letters are quoted below.

From Paul Bradt: Thank you for your note officially announcing my "honorary membership" in the Mountaineering Section.

I shall file it with my diplomas and such valuable papers.

The generous praise in your letter is appreciated, but it makes me a little apprehensive. I want to come out climbing some more; and I'd rather not be so revered that I can't do my share of failing to make the harder routes without disappointing you folks.

Anyhow, thanks again.

From Herb and Jan Conn: We were much honored and thrilled to get your letter telling of our honorary membership. Please relay our thanks to the group.

It seems appropriate at this point to reflect upon "What the PATC Mountaineering Section Has Meant To Me." And at once an anecdote springs to mind, one that Don Hubbard may tell over his Sunday morning eggs.

At the home of Jan's parents near Bethesda was a massively built hardwood dining table which posed a rock climbing problem. You were supposed to traverse under the table from one end to the other without touching the table-top or the floor. Of course Jan's father thought we were hopelessly infantile to spend our time in such ways, but we can never forget how his eyes opened when the rock climbers, mostly eminent Bureau of Standards' scientists, scholars, and PhD.'s, came out to the house for a meeting and all had to have their turn at the Dining Table Traverse. The incident thoroughly endeared the rock climbers in our hearts.

We were at an impressionable age, just striking out from home, and surrounded on all sides by Young America On Its Way Up, success-bent and stuffy. It was more than refreshing to find mature human beings who would climb under a table, sit on a log in the rain and peel an orange, and laugh at the same things we thought were funny. It was intoxicating--and we have never recovered from it.

Thanks again, and though we seldom get to Washington of late, we certainly enjoy reading our UP ROPES and hearing from the group.

WHY DO MEN CLIMB MOUNTAINS?

by Robert K. Byhre

It is hard to believe that men go to mountains only for the physical exercise or climb them because they are there. Surely they do not see them as black-brown masses of earth and rock or unending fields of white snow and blue ice reaching to the skies. The repetition of footsteps over rolling scree to gain height do not appear monotonous to the climber nor are the hours of step-kicking on hard snow.

If this were all we would surely be wasting our substance.

Mountains relinquish their greatest secrets as rewards to those who dare to wend their feeble way among them. The preponderance of magnificent size and stature enables a mere man to judge his own depth by his willingness to expend his physical being and to experience the soul satisfaction of placing himself in God's creation. Diminutive man.

Far from the realm of civilization, facts lose their outlines whereupon little facts assume magnificent proportions, to appear pointedly--then and now, as a knot bent into a rope, a rock bounding down a gully--harmless in nature but brutal to mere man, a resurgent hum of a mountain stove, the glitter of diamonds on purple velvet as seen at dawn in the lee of a snow-clad peak in first light, battering wind on body and tenting--piercing and penetrating.

Such facts are spaced farther apart than facts in daily life, enabling man to accumulate and value their worth more deeply, time spent on belay, time spent awaiting the readiness of route. Time spent in observing direction and picking the onward lead. Time in which to delve to understand or to witness. Time to share the experiences--not with everyone, but sometimes there is someone who feels and enjoys or suffers the same things and values their worth, and is such a great companion.

It is of these times that the writings of the mountaineering world trail off, since there is room in them for nothing more than a man's conception of the infinite. If he fills these periods of suspended fact with stuff of lesser worth, the empty hours will close upon him like a vise and he will return a smaller man than when he started. Mountains do not reveal their secrets easily, nor without exchange.

Mountains are old--eroded by eons gone by, upthrust, shaken, split, and cracked. Weathered by rain, freezing and snow. Shapen and misshapen; but still existing remnants of the birth of the earth.

Mountains are of pure earth unstained by civilization's maladies. Smells of rained on earth and rock born on the winds of the world. Smells of snow, and ice on snow packed by its own weight and crusted by sun and wind and fractured into indefinable shapes and masses.

Mountains have no memory and no compassion, only an indifference so spectacular that man's spirit tends to make of it a moral end in itself and go silent in their presence. Who has not felt so during a flaming sunset or moonrise when blank walls are illuminated by the aurora soft light and bright stars dot the heavens?

Any mountaineer worthy of the name feels an integrated spirit, mind and body, as one with himself, and a deepened conception of the infinite which penetrates his soul and sinew and etches its own memory in his life's blood.

It is for such reasons that men climb mountains.

By Robert K. Byhre
Reprinted from SUMMIT

DETERIORATION OF NYLON ROPE

The U. S. Army Laboratory in Natick, Massachusetts, reports that the deterioration of nylon climbing rope is directly related to its amount of use. The research report, "A Survey of the Deterioration of Nylon Mountain Climbing Rope," is by Louis I. Weiner and Leo J. Sheehan. It attributes deterioration to surface abrasion, but does not consider age an important factor. The report recommends that a record of days' use be kept, and that any rope used over 100 days be retired.

Reprinted from American Alpine News

BUSINESS MEETING -- 16 March

Note the change in the meeting from the second Wednesday of the month to the third, for the month of March.

ANNAPURNA--A 57-minute color film account of the famous 1950 French Expedition to Annapurna in the Karakoram Himalayas will be the program for the business meeting.

"This evening, as I write these lines, the desire siezes me to breathe the night air for a few minutes. It is winter, and cold. Hemmed in between two black masses of houses, ringed by the roofs of my narrow street, the stars seem to move slowly as I advance.

'It is cold,' I say to myself, 'that's a good sign. The snow will be hard.'

...It is both early and late. It is the hour when Mountaineers go out onto the hut terrace to scan the sky, test the wind and snow. It is cold and cold nights mean a fine day. It is the time to light the lantern and start out..."

Gaston Rebuffat

The following has made application for membership in the Mountaineering Section. He will be voted on at the March 16 Business Meeting.

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