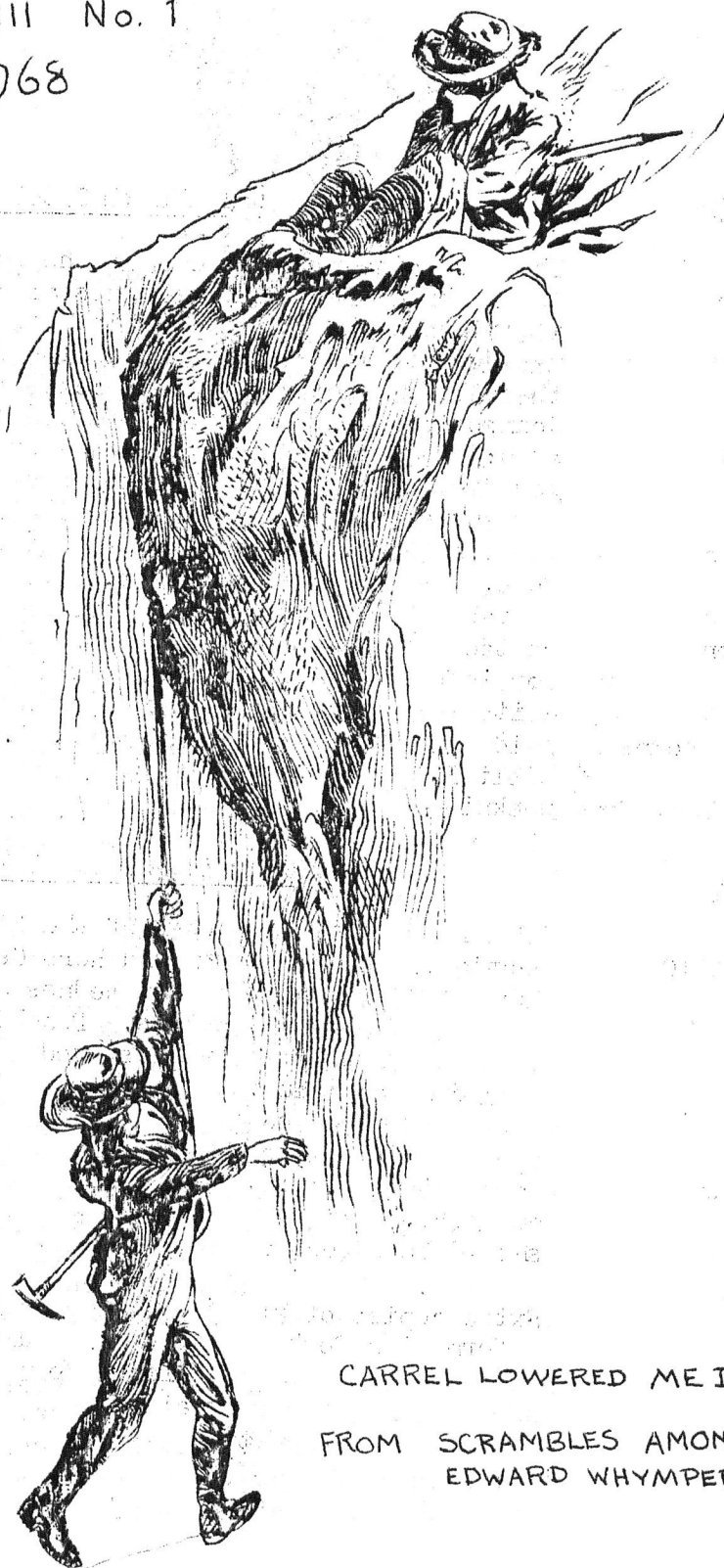


# UP ROPE NEWS OF THE PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

FOUNDED BY JAN AND HERB CONN

VOLUME XXIII No. 1

JANUARY 1968



CARREL LOWERED ME DOWN

FROM SCRAMBLES AMONGST THE ALPS  
EDWARD WHYMPE 1871

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The Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club welcomes all interested individuals who wish to participate in its weekly outings and to share in the freedom of the hills. Sunday day trips leave from Howard Johnson's at Wisconsin and Western Avenues, N.W. at 8:30 am. Come early and have breakfast. If you are late, check behind the southeast drainpipe for any change in scheduled activities. Climbing lasts all day. Groups stop for supper on the way home. Bring lunch and water. Wear clothing suitable for climbing. For further information, contact the trip leader or Lanny Hughey (530-0007). For information about the Mountaineering Section write to: Secretary, Mountaineering Section, PATC, 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036, or visit PATC Headquarters between 7pm. and 10pm. any weeknight.

UP ROPE PUBLICATION

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Extra copies of UP ROPE are generally found at the Information Desk of the PATC should anyone wish one or two for passouts. Please do not take anymore than is necessary for your aims as these are primarily for use by the Information Desk.

INSIGHT AND PROSPECTUS  
CLIMBING IN YOSEMITE

ROBERT NORRIS

In writing this description of my experiences in Yosemite during the month of October, I not only find it most difficult to convey many of my impressions into the visual media, I find it difficult to choose which of those many impressions I wish to write about. The experience of placing my first aid piton (an A3 placement) was quite stimulating to say the least. I still have not decided whether it was fear, excitement, or the "sewing machine" phenomenon which vibrated through my entire being on this initial aid climb. I could tell about watching the moon go into full eclipse over the razor sharp silhouette of El Capitan. I could describe my panic placement of my first "rurp" while standing in a tied-off "baby angle" which was slowly moving from horizontal to vertical. The way up the one hundred foot (5.5) layback, which the guide book describes as appalling, is in itself an interesting tale. The crack, which looked easy, but which was smooth inside and outside-absolutely smooth, and dead vertical-made a vivid impression on me.

There are, I suppose, many facets of this trip which I could describe, but I will limit my exposition to two main areas. First, I will discuss the climbs which were the most impressive to me - for reasons which, I hope, you will all see.

My most enjoyable climb was the Royal Arches which consists of seventeen pitches. My partner was Tom Kimbrough. The climb is rated III, 5.6 and has many pitches of enjoyable climbing. The most notable moments of the climb were on two pendulums across two smooth areas (both of which have been done free - 5.10). I welled up my limited confidence and tried to do the first pendulum free. That turned out to be a disaster. I immediately fell off with only one foot on the traverse. Needless to say, I found out I was not a 5.10 climber.

These two pendulums lead to a dead tree which lays across a chute which exits to the valley floor. One must continue up the fifty-five degree slope of this log to the other side of the chute. Quite exciting! The last two pitches are 5.4 friction traverses. I led the first pitch, Tom led the second. Both pitches are extremely exposed and I was climbing so well that day I decided to see if I could run across the last pitch. I told Tom of my intentions and nerved myself to run across the last thirty feet of the pitch. I quickly discovered that one cannot run laterally on a forty-degree friction slope. One is forced downhill. Fortunately, I made the end of the friction just before I ran out of vertical running room. An interesting lesson! With a faint smile, Tom told me of a girl climber who in falling on that pitch had sat down on her hammer. She went over the edge in a shower of sparks waiting for the rope to pull tight while staring at the valley floor below.

On we went, onto the plateau to joyously and thankfully (and myself, greedily) drink from a stream whose only merit was that it was wet. At no time did I adjust to climbing in the sun all day without water.

A most interesting day, but as I soon found out, it was far from over. We traversed the top of Washington column and started picking our way down North Dome Canyon. When we were in the Canyon proper, Tom started to run. Yes, I said run. This, I learned later, is a standard Yosemite procedure of descent. Most of the climbers are also skiers, so they run down the long descent routes with just enough zig-zag to maintain control. Technically, one is doing the same thing on rock and gravel as one would on snow. The North Dome Canyon descent has, as its final test, a slalom course through the woods which has been put there by many climbers. Running this full speed for the first time is a unique thrill in itself and, as I thought about it later, is also a painless (?) way of descending. The alternative is to spend hours boulder-hopping, twisting and turning, in tight klettershoes. Observing the speed with which most climbers remove their klettershoes, it is apparent that the punishment/time factor is important to most climbers.

A climb which gave me great emotional satisfaction was the Archer Terrace. This climb is rated at III 5.8, and is essentially a two pitch climb. My partner was Rick Sylvester from Beverly Hills, California. Third class climbing takes one up to the first pitch which is about a hundred fifty feet above the ground. This pitch is a one hundred fifty foot traverse on 5.8 friction. When we got to the traverse, we looked in awe at an impressive forty to fifty degree face. Four bolts placed in it were the only evidence that man had dared to set his foot on such an improbable thing. We looked at one another with secret thoughts we dared not speak. Eyes, trying to say what the mind dared not. Egos, victims of past events and of that most basic of all emotions, desire. The equality sign of climbing, the traverse. Not a question of who, but how and if.

It is interesting to observe the mind as it quietly contemplates thoughts that arise on 5.8 friction. There is an awareness of a pervading logic. It becomes a microscope of concentration, constantly aware of the slightest deviation of pressure on the finger tips and soles of the feet. It constantly measures and adjusts the angle between body, legs, and rock. It senses tiny exfoliations that slip under the fingernails like dirt. It becomes aware that the thin line it has searched for so long is here. Feet rest on one knows not what. One spot looks little better than another. To dally is to slip. To slip is to die a little bit. The line, the thin line connecting ability and judgement has been met. The mind scans the route and wonders was that really done, was it really possible?

The traverse is made. A flood of emotion erupts into a smile and one is forever bonded to ones companion climber, friend, fellow human. There are no words needed between you. Communication is there, as true lovers, lying exhausted, satiated in human warmth, know. Words would only limit this undefinable, unlimitable emotion.

The thought occurs later and with some apprehension that the line now has gotten even narrower. The margin of possibility has shrunk. Ambivalent attitudes ping-pong in your mind, but you know you can never go back. In the future, someday, you know you will attempt to cross that line again.

The second pitch is a 5.8 jam crack. It is my lead. I feel as if momentum from the first pitch is carrying me on, but a jam crack is a different set of problems and I quickly settle down. The crack goes easily. I am one hundred forty feet out and at the crux of the pitch. Looking closely at what is ahead of me, I calculate my moves. Three feet above my last pin, I realize I made the wrong move. I am stuck. I cannot let go, nor is there anything for my feet. I am surrounded by smooth granite. I feel myself start to slip very slowly. I increase the counterforce pressure against the crack and continue to slip down, ever so slowly. What to do? There is nothing for my feet, only counterforce holds me to the rock. I continue down. Suddenly, I stop. I do not know why. I lean out far enough to look down at my feet and realize I am standing on my last pin. Wonder of Wonders! A quick reevaluation and the proper moves, and I get to the belay bolt. Rick follows, with not an inkling of my trauma, but with a smile and "Nice lead!"

One climb that is seared into my memory forever is Serenity Crack. My partner on this climb was Roy Bishop from Los Angeles, California. The climb is rated II, 5.7, A2. It is virtually all aid except for a 5.7 layback three hundred feet up. Roy took the first pitch.

As I lay on the ground watching him nail up for one hundred fifty feet, I could not help but admire the fluid motion and lack of strain in his technique. We had spent many hours together on many climbs. We were beginning to function as a team, to anticipate and pull together. We were searching for that elusive quality, speed, to enable us to do one of the big climbs of the valley, perhaps a route on Half Dome. We ventured a mention of this desire once or twice but the replies were still locked within ourselves. The key to the lock was speed and ability. The big walls of Yosemite have nothing but pain, anguish, frustration and danger to repay the slow, inept climber for his efforts.



Roy was at the belay bolt sitting in his belay seat. I "jumared" up, cleaned the route and started nailing the second pitch. After about seventy feet, the crack ran out. I could see another crack some eight feet to my right. I placed a real good pin and decided to try the tension traverse free. It looked awfully difficult. It was. Halfway across, I fell and pendulumed back to the other crack. I had expected to fall, but I had to try it free. Accepting tension, I made it to the other crack and continued nailing to the belay point.

After clipping into three different pitons and sitting in my belay seat suspended from a bong, I watch Roy one hundred fifty feet below me "jumar" up and clean the route. The ground, three hundred feet directly below, contrasted sharply with Roy's profile. I looked up at the 5.7 layback curving, up and over, out of sight above me. Secretly, inside, I was glad it was not my lead.

Roy came up looking tired. We exchanged hardware and a few terse comments which I have forgotten but the next several moments stand vividly in my mind. He begins the next pitch and puts a bong in just above my head. He starts up the layback, maybe twenty feet, then he stops. With growing apprehension, I watch him start down. I manage to take in a few feet of rope, then "Bob, I think I'm going to fall!" I watch as Roy floats down, no sound, no cry, not even the scrape of a boot. For an instant, I look into his eyes as he falls directly by me, on his back with arms and legs spread out. No sign of emotion, only a vacant stare, his face frozen as if he has now, at this instant become an unperson. Then for me, all hell breaks loose. Roy's face is jolted from my mind. Everything happens so fast. Reflex rules for an instant. No control exists. It is over before one's mind can grasp the significance of what is happening. Awareness returns and I see a mass of ropes and carabiners in front of me. I look down at Roy who is beginning to stand up and with a sigh of relief I see him smile.

"Are you ok?"

"Yes, I'm ok!"

Trying to tie Roy off, and attempting to get the piton which I am sitting in driven, and my belay seat under me again take considerable time. Meanwhile, Roy begins to hurt. I lower the jumars to him. He "jumars" up and we decide to go down. We untie and rappel off the fixed pins to the bolt and from there to the ground. By the time we get to the ground, Roy can hardly walk. We think about finishing the climb, but fortunately decide against it. Frankly, I do not feel I have the nerve to try that layback after that experience. Fortunately, Roy's injuries are not too serious, but they do end his climbing for the season.

(End part one. Part two to appear next issue.)

#### Accident on Seneca

On the Veterans' Day weekend there was an official trip to Seneca Rock which, for lack of a trip leader, will probably not be reported in UP ROPE. I have therefore taken it upon myself, as senior man present, to give an account of an accident which occurred on Saturday night, November 11, and which except for blind luck might have been fatal. I think there are some lessons to be learned.

Late Saturday afternoon, as the sun was grazing the western hills, Chris Buckingham, Joe and Dave Ney, and Kate and I were descending from the Cockscomb Notch to the Old Ladies' Traverse when we encountered four climbers from another Washington club on their way to the South Peak. Chris knew one of the girls, and there was the usual kidding back and forth. But we reminded them that it would be dark in another half hour. They appeared unconcerned, indicating that they had a 300-foot rope and would rappel from the large Pine tree at the top of the Old Men's Route.

Our party was a quarter-way down from the Luncheon Ledge as the light began to fail, and our thoughts turned to supper. Then voices were heard from high on the Rock. Chris became concerned about the safety of the other party - two of whom were with-

out previous climbing experience\*- and determined to go back to the base of the rock to make sure they got down. Dave and Joe went with him, while Kate and I started on down the hill. No sooner had we reached the road than Dave appeared behind us, visibly shaken. Chris had been hit by a falling rock and was lying on the ground in an undetermined condition. I agreed to go back up as fast as I could. Meanwhile Dave and Kate went to the pavilion to get help.

Chris was indeed huddled on the ground, complaining of arm, chest and back bruises. But he was coherent and appeared to have no broken bones. After a few minutes' rest he was able to walk slowly down to the road, assisted by Mark Carpenter, Mike Hill, Bill Thomas and others, and even to ride his motorcycle home the next day.

All of this is most remarkable in view of what had happened. Chris had climbed free to a ledge some 30 feet above the trail in order to untangle the rappel ropes for the party above. (This was somewhere in the area of "le Gourmet".) While he was busy doing this, someone kicked a "football-sized" rock from the Pine tree ledge 150 feet above. Chris flattened himself against the wall, but the rock struck him in the back and arm with great force, knocking him off the ledge. Actually the rock struck a coiled rope he was carrying on one shoulder, and this may have softened the blow. He is said to have made three flips in the air before striking the ground, and then to have rolled a long way down the slope.

As it turned out, several ribs were broken, and Chris was unable to work for about a week and a half. But it seems to me that we are fortunate that the consequences were no more serious. He could easily have been killed by the rock (no hard hat) or by the fall.

Everyone is free to draw his own conclusions from this unfortunate incident. Here are mine:

1. I do not fault Chris for taking the action he took. I would probably have done the same if I had felt responsible for the party on the rock.

2. A dangerous situation was created by an inexperienced party which did not appreciate the necessity of getting off the rock before dark. The organization to which these climbers belong should feel some responsibility in the matter.

3. I strongly recommend that we do not schedule trips to Seneca without a trip leader who can be counted on to show up, who will satisfy himself that climbing parties are competent, and who will see to it that everyone gets off before dark.

4. I suggest that we schedule a discussion at an early business meeting on the question: What should one do if benighted on Seneca? One can climb down, rappel or bivouac. Which is best?

5. Everyone climbing on Seneca should wear a hard hat. You never know who is going to be walking around over your head.

6. It is imperative that we and all other clubs using Seneca take appropriate steps to assure safety at all times. One serious accident might result in our being denied access to this beautiful rock.

R. J. Adams

\* Italics are mine - Ed.

Ed. Remarks: Regarding Bob's concussions, the organization referred to is the Potomac Speleological Club. While I doubt they should be held responsible for actions of their individual members, I imagine they are willing to state, by means of a letter to UP ROPE, the extent to which they do feel responsibility for inculcating healthy respect for the dangers inherent in (1) taking inexperienced climbers on a lead climb as perhaps their initial climb, and (2) night climbing or rappelling on Seneca. As I am aware, there was only one light among the party involved. I have, personally, had the opportunity of talking with the party leader. He is of the opinion he was counting no danger. Perhaps he too will be willing to make a statement in UP ROPE. Both he and PSC should understand at this point no stone throwing is intended here or contemplated. The intent is serious, the interest is safety, present and future.

## TRIP REPORTS

Carderock, Maryland

December 3

A backpacking contingent led by Grant Conway appeared at Carderock at noon to be greeted by a cluster of climbers led by Dave Templeton, near a fire at the base of the cliffs. After introductions and lunch, Mark Carpenter's rescue crew, Bill Deuterman, Chuck Sproull, and Al Goldberg demonstrated rescue technique with Dede Bauer as their hapless victim. Following this Art Wilder demonstrated an overhead belay checkout, checking out Linnea Stewart with Dave Templeton as fall guy and Joan Templeton as back-up. Rappel Technique was then demonstrated by Art and Prussik Technique was demonstrated by Terry Robinson. General climbing was then done and all repaired to Grant Conway's for delightful conversation and a wonderful repast of Lazagna and Italian Salad prepared by Ione Conway.

The attendance list was lost. Sorry. But there were as I recall, Fred and Ruth Blackburn, Grant Conway, Dede Bauer, Don Schaeffer, and several others from the PATC. All the climbing contingent was there (after it warmed-up).

Dave Templeton

## GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## MEETINGS

The New York Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club is presenting A Symposium On Mountaineering Medicine on Saturday, January 20, 1968 between the hours of 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM at the American Red Cross Building, 150 Amsterdam Avenue, New York City. Doors open at 9:30. Lunch will be from noon to 1:30 PM. Speakers include Drs. Kraus, Houston, Huggins, Silverstein, Dingman, Kreider, and McDade.

Register early by sending a check for \$3.00 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Gordon Shellard, New York Life Insurance Company, 51 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010. Make checks payable to Gordon Shellard.

## ILLNESS

Tom McCrumm is in Bethesda Naval Hospital, Ward 5C, recuperating from an operation on his shoulder. He is said to be in a cast from here to there, but it'll be worth it to get the arm back in decent action again. Hurry and get well, Tom.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

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Alexandria, Virginia, 22365  
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Keith Helsby  
Service Committee  
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William H. Oscanyon III  
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22204

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

John P. Hackett  
Sponsors: A. E. Wilder  
L. R. Hughey

Sue Goldberg  
Sponsors: Glenn Cannon  
Al Goldberg

## NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Samuel H Black  
11400 S. Glen Road  
Potomac, Maryland 20854

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- December 31            Carderock, Maryland  
                      Leader: Dave Templeton (424-7997)
- January 7             Camp Lewis, Maryland  
                      Leader: Rich Hall (582-0328)
- January 14            Cupid's Bower, Maryland  
                      Leader: Joe Nolte (836-6650)
- January 17            Business Meeting, Election of Officers, Club House, 8 P.M.
- January 21            Herzog's Island, Maryland  
                      Leader: Trudy Turner (333-6312)
- January 28            Great Falls, Virginia  
                      Leader: Larry Griffin (560-8831)
- February 4            Carderock, Maryland

## DIRECTIONS TO CLIMBING AREAS

## Carderock, Maryland

Refer UP ROPE, Vol. XXII, No 6, June 1967, Page 7

## Cupids Bower, Maryland

Refer UP ROPE, Vol. XXII, No 8, August 1967, Page 9

## Great Falls, Virginia

Refer UP ROPE, Vol. XXII, No 12, December 1967, Page 8

## Herzog's Island, Maryland

Refer to John Reed's map showing "Climbs Along the Potomac Gorge".

Directions are same as for Carderock. The island is the land mass directly across the river arm from the Carderock Cliffs. It is reached by wading, canoeing or walking (assuming a frozen river)

## Camp Lewis, Maryland

Refer to John Reed's map "Climbs Along the Potomac Gorge. The area contains several easy to difficult climbs.

From the lower parking area at Carderock, follow the shoreline path down river. The rocks lie just above the Cabin John Bridge.

Alternately take the tow path from the last parking area or from that below the Cabin John Bridge to the overflow and sewer above the Bridge. Follow a path beside this to river. There the rocks are fifty yards to the left.

\* \* \* \* HAPPY HOLIDAYS \* \* \* \*