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Adventures at the Shawangunks when the sun isn't shining
(Being the Congenial Reflections of a
Latter Day Knickerbocker)

Tom McCrumm

During the past year we have been plagued with much bad weather during our weekends at the Gunks. Because of this, our resourcefulness has found many other things to do when we wouldn't climb.

One of the most popular bad weather pastimes is a hike from the Uberfall down to Mohonk, either to the rocks at Skytop, or the Mohonk Mountain House itself. The Guide to the Shawangunks describes the route. Also, in the same area are some interesting rock formations called Devil's Staircase.

Another popular side trip is a hike up to the falls by Lake Minnewaska. The trail to these falls starts off route 55-44, about a half mile west of the Ski Minne area, following the stream about another half mile up to the falls which are quite spectacular. In winter the falls are all frozen solid, and some careful ice climbing could be done there. Continuing up the trail past the falls, one comes to the road into Lake Minnewaska. The lake at Minnewaska is beautiful in both winter and summer. In winter it can be walked upon, offering a multitude of short climbs and boulder problems from the water's edge; and in summer it is so clear that the bottom can be seen almost anywhere.

There is a large rock formation directly behind the Ski Minne lodge which offers some climbing possibilities, or one can throw snowballs off its top onto one's friends as we did last November. One can always go snurfing at Bontique Ski Area (Joe Donohue permitting).

A nice morning trip is the hike up to Milbrook Mountain to investigate the rock there. Most of the climbs are rated over 5.7 and have aid pitches. The approach starts up through the woods about two miles down the road past Emil's Restaurant. Be careful going up in snowy weather, as an icy boulderfield has to be crossed. Another pleasant half day trip is the hike into Outback Slabs. The approach is described in the Gunk guidebook.

It's only a short drive over into the lower Catskills where some easy but quite pleasant climbing and hiking can be found. The Appalachian Trail Guide to that area covers the possibilities. For the more industrious drivers, West Point is not too far down the river and is always open to visitors.

Starting about the first of July the blueberries begin to ripen on top of the cliffs at the Shawangunks. The most luscious berries can be found on top of the Near Trapps, back off the trail about 100 feet.

In really obnoxious weather, when one would rather be under cover, a visit to the Brotherhood Winery in Washingtonville, N.Y. is a must. Washingtonville is on route 94 about

25 miles south of New Paltz. Free tours can be made through the oldest winery in the U.S. all year round, with much sampling of the wines. It's quite an experience on a rainy afternoon -- and the barns there offer some great building climbing too -- that is if one is still standing!

Last but not least...one can always stand around the campground in the mud and the rain and drink beer.

Hangíng Around



O.R. Tang: Overhang

specialist.

Ape Index: 14.4

Little Stony Man
Aug. 24

Mike Hill - Trip Leader
Nellie Widmayer
Al Klovedahl
Sallie Jordan
Deanna Ballou
Roger Birch

Art Wilder
Sallie Greenwood
Els Litjens
Merv Oleson
Linnea Stewart
Ann Stewart

Al, Sallie J., Deanna, and Roger were so psyched up about climbing that they were on the rocks at 9:30! Al led them up Keyhole before the rest of us even showed up. Art, Sallie G., Ann, and Els took off soon after arriving