



FOUNDED BY  
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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

Vol. 35 No. 1

Jan. 1970

PAGE 1

MOUNT MCKINLEY: Summit of North America

Frank E. Zahar

For months of unbearable suspense we waited for the National Park Service's telegram. Here it was at last -- our permission for an ascent of Mount McKinley. The "1969 Tenada Expedition" was official.

Our 5-man group rendezvoused in Anchorage on June 20. Don Wallace and J.B. had driven the 5,000 miles to Alaska while Leader Reed Markley, his wife of one week, and I had flown out. The rest of the day of reunion was spent filling out our expedition's equipment and food requirements.

The following morning we took leave of our wonderful hostess, Mrs. Hoeman, and set off for Talkeetna. Two of our members and the equipment went by microbus while the other three took the slow train that wound its way through the mountains and stopped here and there to take on or let off a single passenger.

Talkeetna, the booming metropolis of nowhere, looks like a Hollywood set. Don Sheldon, our glacier pilot, arrived at the station in a cloud of dust and a beat-up pickup. I will never forget this man, with his big, easy smile and his sense of humor that will always make you laugh.

Will our food all packed and the rain clouds departing, we made ready for our fly-in to the southeast fork of the Kahiltina Glacier. Old stuff for Sheldon but heart stopping for us, the fly-in through glacial valleys and a notch in a ridge made me hold my breath when it seemed that our wing tips might scrape the rock walls. The glacier came up to meet us, and before I knew it we had landed. J.B. and I unloaded the Cessna in a hurry.

By the next day we were all in base camp at 7,400 feet. Our unbelievable surroundings were almost overwhelming. Walls of rock and ice soared up on all sides above us. We set up a 12 hour time schedule so as to take advantage of the more favorable snow conditions prevailing during the cooler parts of the day. Darkness never comes at this time of year in Alaska. Our work was cut out for us. Hundreds of pounds of food and equipment had to be moved up the mountainside. We would have six camps enroute to the summit. Base camp (7,400 feet) to Camp 5 (17,200 feet) would be a distance of 14 miles and a gain of 9,800 feet.

We soon learned that there are crevasses on the Kahiltina -- Don stooped to straighten a willow wand and disappeared before my very eyes. The four-letter words issuing from the crevasse's opening soon convinced us that he was alright. A quick (?) rescue, then lunch before reaching Camp 1.

The journey to Camps 2 and 3 is beset with problems. Our snowshoes take a beating as the hard crust of early morning

grinds away at them and the late morning slush softens the gut, but they help us cross the many snow bridges. There are places on the Kahiltina that make me feel as though I am walking on trap doors, not knowing when some glacier troll might pull the release mechanism. Bad colds plague us, passing from one person to another. The packs seem to gain weight. With a great sense of relief we place Camp Three at 11,250 feet. At last we are off the Kahiltina and on the mountain proper.

That evening, the towering cliffs of the West Buttress glow golden above us. Early morning silence is broken only by our voices, while later the sun's rays thaw the ice walls around us and we are accompanied through the day by the hiss and roar of avalanches.

We make slow progress on our first day's attempt to put up Camp Four. I find myself leading through white-out conditions as we pass 12,000 feet on our way to Windy Corner. Now and then I come across an old willow wand. Some close calls with a few concealed crevasses add spice to our slowness. With goggles on, I have no depth perception. Without them I would go blind. It's cold and the wind drives the snow into our faces. Just as the time has come to make the go-no go decision, I find a few more wands and head for what I think is Windy Corner. Strangely enough, the weather clears somewhat as we reach the crest. Time for a break before we push on to the great basin at 14,000 feet. Fatigue and altitude bear down hard as we slog to the 14,200 foot level and collapse on our packs. Camp Four will be established here after three relays to bring up equipment.

Now the real slopes of the 2,000-foot West Buttress loom above our tents. We spend one day for acclimatization at Camp Four before tackling the Buttress, while visions of a summit day dance in our heads.

The next day we find 600 feet of fixed line left in place by a previous group. The inclinometer reads 55 degrees on the steepest slope of the West Buttress. "Jumaring" up the lines, Penny drops her camera and we watch it bounce down the slopes for almost 2,000 feet without stopping. The fixed line leads onto a ridge at 16,400 feet where a much deserved break is taken.

Concluded on page 2

### ELECTIONS

Elections will be held at the Section's Annual Meeting, January 14. The nominations are as follow:

Chairman

Tom McCrumm  
Don Milligan

Vice Chairman

Don Schaefer

## P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

OFFICERSPRESIDENT

Bob Robinson  
356-4584

VICE PRESIDENT

Lanny Hughey  
530-0007

SECRETARY

Tom McCrumm  
527-6272

TREASURER

Arthur Wilder  
439-9043

UP ROPE STAFFEDITOR

Bill Deutermann  
363-0757

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Sallie Greenwood  
683-5091

BUSINESS MANAGER

Arthur Wilder  
439-9043

## President's Corner

This is my last contribution as chairman to UP ROPE, editorial prerogative permitting, because, as you will read elsewhere in this issue, elections are being held this month for my successor.

I suppose this note might be a valedictory oration, at least I survived the year's ordeal. However, the real purpose is to say that I enjoyed it, I shall resign with regret and to thank you all for the support I received.

I hope you will give the new chairman at least as much support as I had.

I apologize for the lack of success in some of the projects I said at the beginning of the year I hoped I might initiate. Unfortunately I have found it difficult to put as much time into the administrative work as I felt it needed. Though I was invited to continue I came to the conclusion it would be better in the Section's interests if someone else who may be able to put in more time takes on the job. In any case I may return to England next year; I do not know yet but I hope to continue to enjoy the Section's activities for much of 1970.

Lastly I want to record my special thanks to members who took on particular jobs for the Section at my request and to the UP ROPE staff for their continuing and most important contribution to the health of the Section.

Mount McKinley, concluded

Now an exhilarating ridge of rock and snow leads up into the breathless heights beyond. At 17,200 feet we find a large snow cave dug out of a gentle slope. We are all exhausted from gasping the thin air, poor J.B. is still fighting a cold, too. Two bottles of oxygen were brought up for emergency use only and left in the cave. I wish we could stay here but one more load relay must be made before Camp 5 is fully established.

Our summit day, July 15, dawns bright and clear. This snow cave is a constant 6 degrees. The stove sputters, flames and dies and I call it everything but an Optimus! Finally, after an agonizing 3 and a half hours for breakfast and water bottle filling, I turn the stove off.

We anxiously start off towards Denali Pass. We pass by a frozen predecessor, his icy grave a grim reminder of what this mountain can do. As I lead the way up to the Pass, altitude slows my pace considerably. The endless, excruciating effort of placing one foot in front of the other becomes monotonous. The temperature is not much above zero, but fortunately

there is little wind. Every hour we switch leads. Our girl Penny is carrying on just as well as we. I feel hungry but the food doesn't seem to want to go down. Over 19,000 feet now, the final 1,000 feet rise in front of us as every step now takes the greatest effort. Lift one foot, pause, gulp in two, three, sometimes six breaths of non-existent air, then the other foot, over and over. Damn! won't that last crest ever come beneath our feet? We gain the final summit ridge and the whole world seems to appear beneath our feet. J.B., roped behind me, collapses in his tracks time and again. Another twenty minutes and we stand on the highest knob of snow. This is it -- we have reached our objective -- the summit of North America! Our impossible dream has been realized.

It's 10:30 pm, but the sub-arctic sky still glows with light. The temperature is minus 5° and a stabbing, 30 mph wind licks the mountain top. Five micro-specks of human matter stand atop this summit of all vastness. Even Mt. Foraker, over 17,000 feet high, looks small and insignificant from our lofty vantage point. One last look around, a few photographs, and we begin our descent.

We are worried about J.B., he is not himself. Just plain exhaustion or pulmonary edema? Taking no chance, we prepare for a rapid descent. J.B. cannot move very fast, but the slopes are not extremely steep and fatigue breeds carelessness. I slip twice, immediately arrest myself with my ice ax.

At 2:30 in the morning we stagger into the snow cave, too tired to cook, and crawl into our havens of lofty down. Don and I are frostbitten -- my big toe and seven of his finger tips.

By noon we awake to the sound of a sputtering stove; J.B. is cooking dinner! We are relieved to find him well again.

Happiness is going down a mountain even with 70 pound pack frames. Passing Windy Corner, covered now with a thick blanket of new snow, we flounder and fall through the crust. "Son of a dot," we cry -- well, something like that...

In the next 27 hours we descend 13,000 feet to Camp 2. Two days more travel finds us winding our way among the crevasses once again toward base camp.

We raise Don Sheldon on the radio. "Fill in the holes in the landing site!" he says, "I might get you out today yet."

"Do you hear it?" Sure enough, the droning of Sheldon's Cessna resounds off the towering walls that surround us. He swoops down low for a look and comes up to an uphill landing. Don and I will fly out first to have our frostbite treated in Anchorage. Sheldon tells us to strap in extra snugly for a rough take off. Good advice! We brace ourselves as the little plane jounces along the glacier, tearing itself loose to join the birds in its intended habitat. The glacier sinks smoothly as our little machine struggles to gain altitude. Looking down we see the remote speck that was once our lonely home. A sense of insignificance seeps into us once again as we watch the tiny tent of base camp vanish beneath the clouds.

Crouched in the back seat, I contemplate the meaning of our endeavor. It's so very hard to explain the "why" of it all. Perhaps it will never be explained in its fullest why man would ever want to climb a mountain. But he does, and the climber will be dominated only by the lure of the high places themselves.

Up Rope

UP ROPE is the Newsletter of the PATC Mountaineering Section, founded by Jan and Herb Conn in 1944. Publication is on the last Wednesday of each calendar month at PATC Headquarters. Deadline for submitted material is the next to last Wednesday of the month preceding an issue. Material for inclusion, comments or questions on editorial policy should be directed to EDITOR, UP ROPE, c/o PATC, 1718 N Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. Subscription rates are \$1.50 per year. New subscriptions and changes of address should be directed to Business Manager, UP ROPE, etc.

# 



Roger Birch demonstrates a new item in "hardware": convenient, not particularly portable, not adjustable and guaranteed to jam. (note rope through hole in rock)



Bill Thomas prussicked up to find out why Roger was so hung up. Taken at Devil's Garden.

Mark Carpenter  
Joe Lipman  
Martha Lipman  
Kenny Lipman  
Fred Lipman  
Bob Norris  
John Stannard  
Jim Wallace

Don Milligan  
Pat Milligan  
Mark Milligan  
Jerry Archibald  
Al Weis  
Merv Olsen  
Hal Swift

Upon reviewing old trip reports from UP ROPE, it turns out that the recent Thanksgiving trip to the Gunks had the largest attendance of any other Gunks trip except over Memorial Day this year. I am sure the fact that we had accommodations in the Mohonk chauffeur's cottage for the weekend, was a big drawing factor. Although a total of 34 people were there, it was a constantly fluctuating attendance due to Thanksgiving schedules, plane schedule, weather, and God knows what else. We all seemed to arrive and depart at all hours of the day and night over a period of four days.

Many of us had Thanksgiving dinner at Al Weis' house in New York. A huge Thanksgiving dinner for 28 people was complete except for the Indians!

It was a pleasure to be joined by some seldom seen climbing friends. Larry and Sally Griffen joined us from Denver for the weekend along with their friends Phil Healey and Linnel Raika. Sally's sister, Penny Cromwell, also joined us, making her appearance with the PATC-MS climbers for the first time since Carderock about two years ago. Bob Norris, freshly back from Yosemite, was able to join us at Al's for dinner only. After showing some magnificent slides of the Fall's accomplishments in the Valley, he departed to catch a plane to England, where he will spend the winter. Our old friend, bearded and bushy Mark Carpenter, joined us from Vermont for the weekend.

Larry Griffen was able to average 4 climbs a day for the five days that he was at the Gunks. Mike Hill and Mark Carpenter racked off a number of cold 5.7's while most of the rest of us either did easier and warmer climbs or ate turkey. Pat Milligan had problems falling off of a 5.9, but then who doesn't?? The most notable climbing feat of the weekend was Jerry Archibald's return to climbing. He led Lanny Hughey and Penny Pierce on Easy 0 on Sunday. Jerry's leg managed to hold up without pain. We are all eager to see him back actively climbing soon. Nine months is a long time to spend off the rocks!

The weather was of course cold, as should be expected for Thanksgiving in the Gunks. But, although it was often overcast we had no snow, and during the day it got up to about 45° so that climbing wasn't too painful and everyone did as much as possible.

The Mohonk Chauffeur's Cottage was the scene for large activity for the four days. There were people sleeping all over, in, around, under, and outside. With a fire going in the stove and 25 people in the cottage it got reasonably warm at night. The addition of a cold keg of beer on the back porch also helped warm the spirits. Again, we are all grateful to Joe Donohue and Dan Smiley for allowing the Mountaineering Section members to use the cottage in the winter.

### BELAY LEDGE

#### Membership Nomination:

The following person has been nominated for membership in the PATC Mountaineering Section.

#### Name

Tom Evans

#### Sponsors

Bob Lyon  
Bob Robinson

The nominee should be present at the next scheduled business meeting so that the application can be voted on.

#### Greenland Gap guide:

Tom McCrumm is starting work on a rough guidebook of the area which will be distributed in March. Please send information on any climbs done there to him and/or to UP ROPE. There should be close to 25 climbs completed by March. At present all of the established climbs are 5.4-5.7. People interested in putting up new climbs in grades 5.0-5.3 and 5.8 and up please help out so that the March book will have a good cross section of graded climbs.

Shawangunks  
Nov. 27-30

Tom McCrumm - Trip Leader  
Don Schaefer  
Chuck Sproull  
Sallie Jordan and Moses  
Bill Thomas  
Lanny Hughey  
Pat Kenny  
Bob Robinson  
Roger Birch  
Deanna Ballou  
Al Goldberg

Terry Robinson  
June Lehman  
Mike Hill  
Linnea Stewart  
Larry Griffen  
Sally Griffen  
Penny Cromwell  
Jim Downs  
Phil Healey  
Penny Pierce  
Linnel Raika

## CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

Date	Place	Leader
Jan. 4	Great Falls, Md.	Art Wilder (439-9043)
Jan. 11	Cupids Bower	Terry Robinson (768-6845)
Jan. 14	Meeting, PATC Headquarters, 8:00 pm	Elections and British Columbia's Caribboos, Art Wilder's slides
Jan. 18-18	Seneca Rock	Bob Robinson (356-4584)
Jan. 25	Camp Lewis	Al Goldberg (593-8124)
Feb. 1	Carderock and Herzog Island	Lanny Hughey (530-0007)
Feb. 8	Purple Horse	Art Wilder (439-9043)
Feb. 11	Meeting, PATC Headquarters, 8:00 pm	
Feb. 15	Whiteoak Canyon hike	Don Schaefer (521-5326)
Feb. 21-22	Mount Washington	Tom McCrumm (527-6272)

Trip Leaders are reminded of their responsibility to arrange for a report and, if a leader is unable to make his assigned trip, to appoint a substitute leader.

## Great Falls, Md.

From the Beltway take the last exit in Maryland before the Cabin John Bridge (or first after bridge if coming from Virginia) toward Great Falls and Carderock (note signs). Go past Carderock exit and turn left onto MacArthur Boulevard when Parkway ends. Go approximately 4 miles to the Great Falls parking lot. Walk left (downriver).

## Cupid's Bower, Md.

From the Washington Beltway, take the last exit in Maryland before the Cabin John Bridge, or from Virginia, the first exit after the Bridge toward Great Falls and Carderock. When the Parkway ends turn left onto MacArthur Boulevard to the Old Anglers Inn. Park in the dirt lot on the left and cross the canal. Walk right (upstream) toward Widewater. Take the blue-blazed trail left near Widewater to the river. Cross the

river to the island. Cupid's Bower is near the foot of the island nearest D.C.

## Seneca Rock, W. Va.

From the Beltway take I 66 to Gainesville and bear right onto Va. 55 to Moorefield, W.Va. Turn left onto U.S. 220 to Petersburg and right onto W. Va. 4 and 28. Mouth of Seneca is 22 miles from Petersburg on W. Va. 4 and 28.

## Camp Lewis, Md.

From the Beltway take the Carderock exit. Take the Carderock exit and go left over the overpass and left again so that you are headed toward Washington. Drive to the Cabin John Bridge, bearing right at the fork just before going under it, and park on the right at the first parking lot past the bridge. Cross the canal, walk under the bridge and turn left, following the bridge to the river. Walk up the river (right) 100 yards to the rocks.

## Carderock, Md.

From the beltway take the last exit in Maryland before the Cabin John Bridge (or first after bridge if coming from Virginia) toward Great Falls and Carderock (note signs). Go 1 mile to Carderock sign, bear right, go left over overpass, under canal in tunnel, and right to last parking lot. The rocks are beyond the Bulletin Board.

## Purple Horse, Md

Follow Cupids Bower directions as far as parking lot across from Old Angler's Inn. Cross the canal at the dirt bridge and walk right (north) to Widewater (a very wide place on the canal). Cross the cement foot bridge and turn left on a trail. Follow trail to the river and to the rocks.



Ah, ha! A leg. Al Weis wins again.

Picture by Linnea Stewart

Up Rope

1718 N St N W

Washington, D. C. 20036

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE

PAID

WASHINGTON, D. C.  
PERMIT NO. 9615