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Mt. Washington, N.H., Washington's Birthday 1971

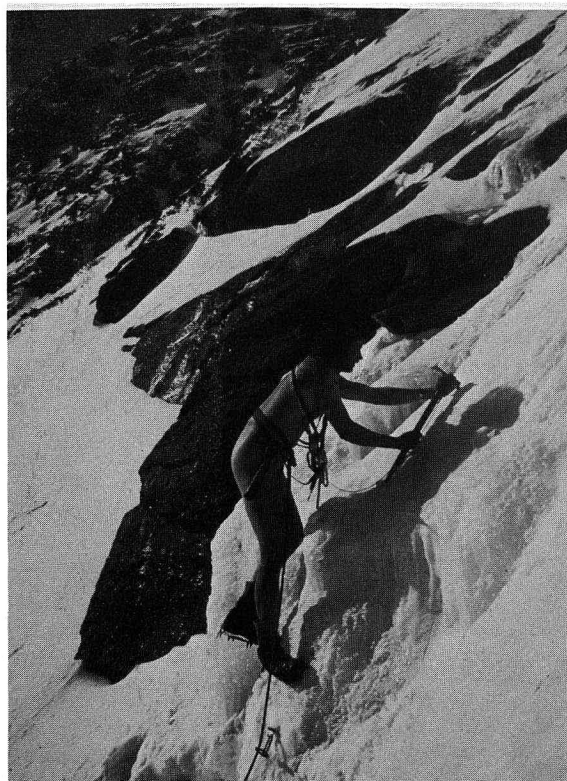
by Tom McCrumm

The weather at Pinkham Notch was surprisingly mild the afternoon Tink Peters and I arrived, with some rain or snow forecast for that evening. Rain? How can it ever rain on Mt. Washington in February? We joined a number of other Washington climbers -- June Lehman, Linda Harris, Maitland Sharpe, Paul Bonnis and friend Eric, Chuck Sproull, Peter Gardiner, and Dave Templeton -- in the Harvard Hut. Jerry Archibald and Penny Pierce (now Penny Archibald!) came up from New York, and our old friend Mark Carpenter came over from his home in Vermont.

Soon it began to rain. Ah yes, and the temperature hovered around freezing for the next 24 hours, with a light rain most of the time. Undaunted by this strange phenomenon, most of us practiced self-arrest, getting thoroughly moistened by the snow and rain. That evening the hut was festooned with wet clothes and gear, and the crowd was entertained by a self-styled expert from New England who fancied himself a great rescue leader. Three guys had not returned from Damnation Gully, and it appeared that we might have to form a rescue party. It turned out that they had gotten lost in the fog at the top and stumbled around in the woods for 10 hours. It was fairly tense in the cabin until word came at 2 or 3 a.m. that they had been rescued and were alive.

By Sunday the rain had stopped, and although it was not a clear day, Tink, June and myself on one rope, and Maitland, Peter and Linda on a second rope started South Gully, primarily a steep snow climb, but with a short ice pitch at the top that can be done. Unfortunately, as we climbed higher the weather worsened -- the wind was a steady 35 mph, blowing snow so that visibility was very poor, and there was a constant stream of snow pouring down the gully over our feet. About two-thirds of the way up we turned and plunge-stepped back down to the base of the gully. Some of the novices were quite unmoved by the experience, and it was a relief to get out of the nasty weather. Dave and Chuck, however, had managed to do Central Gully, a long snow gully with a short ice pitch at the bottom. They arrived back at the hut later on so covered with frozen mist that they looked like a 7-11 Slurpee!

Monday dawned a clear day, but, typical of Mt. Washington, cold and very windy. Since everyone but Maitland and myself had to leave that day, we decided to ascend en masse the east side of the ravine to the summit of Nelson Crag. By the time we got near the top edge of the ravine we were really being buffeted about by the high winds, but we decided to go on as far as possible. After 15 more minutes of hard going in 70 mph gusts, we noted that Peter Gardiner had frostbite on his nose, so we all decided to call it a weekend and return to the Harvard hut to pack up for the trip home.



RAVIN DU NORD EN PIOLET BARASSE

For the next ten days Maitland and I were there in relative peace, with only three other climbers, from Portland and Boston, and a group from Minnesota. One perfect day we did Central Gully, and as we neared the top, we became increasingly aware of what sounded like a gigantic vacuum cleaner hissing and roaring. We topped out into a strong wind, packed the rope and hardware and headed for the summit under deep blue skies and an intense sun. At the summit, the wind was so strong that it actually knocked us off our feet several times, and we had to crouch down with our backs to the wind

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Book Review

by Tom McCrumm

Climbers Guide to Yosemite, by Steve Roper,
Published 1971 by the Sierra Club, San Francisco
265 pages, with photographs of route locations.
\$6.95

This long awaited and much needed new guide to Yosemite finally appeared in climbing circles this spring, but only after Yosemite Valley got hot and crowded. Steve Roper, who edited the first climbers' guide to Yosemite in 1964, has much truly outdone himself in this new guidebook. Completely revised, the new edition has added over 200 new routes -- all those done before October, 1970 -- making a total of 482 route descriptions. Included are sections on Yosemite history, climbers' traditions, recommended climbs, equipment, and grading systems. As well as a complete alphabetical index of climbs, the book contains an appendix which lists all climbs according to grade and difficulty. The Sierra Club has published this guide as the first in its new "Totebook" series, with soft cover and removable pages, facilitating addition and revision. Without a doubt an outstanding climbers' guidebook.

EDITORIAL

by Tink Peters

I trust everyone has read about the plans of several electric power companies and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to build six giant power plants (with three strip mines to supply them) in the Four Corners area of the Southwest. Two of them are already built, and one of them puts out more fly ash and soot than is produced by all sources in L.A. and New York City combined. Smoke from this plant was the only man-made phenomenon on Earth visible to a Gemini satellite camera not long ago. One of the proposed plants is to be three times the size of this plant.

This, in one of the most unspoiled and beautiful areas of our country -- in a place where the dry clear air and the deep blue wide open sky are everything; where thousands of people, from all over the world, visit the many great national parks; where there are 39 Indian reservations. (But, as you know, Indians don't count.)

This scheme is sick. It is the absolute epitome, to me, of the blind "growth" syndrome -- let the people of Los Angeles and Las Vegas have yet more neon signs and all the electric knives and toothbrushes and can openers they want! Nevermind, I guess, that you won't be able to see clearly across

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Mt. Washington, continued from page 1

waiting for a slight lull when we would leap ahead until another strong gust threw us down again. We discovered in the weather station that the winds were over 100 mph and the temperature a cool 12 below zero!

The next few days, Maitland and I climbed on a small but almost overhanging ice bulge in the base of the ravine, and on the ice bulges at the base of Yale Gully. Later we returned to do all the ice in Yale Gully, belaying from shaky ice screws and often from an ice axe stuck in about 5 inches into hard snow.

Our next long climb was North Gully -- on an exquisitely beautiful day. The base of the ravine was filled with clouds as we trudged up to the bottom of the ice. Maitland won the coin flip and got to lead the first pitch, carefully avoiding all the steps cut a few days previously by the weekend crowd. As we reached the top of the second pitch, the clouds dropped a bit and we could see the summit and flank of Mt. Washington rising from a sea of light grey clouds that extended as far as we could see. The sky above was indigo, perfectly cloudless, the air mild, and not a whisper of wind. At the top of the fourth pitch, Maitland did a very hairy traverse out a narrow ledge and up some very thin ice to an arm of rock projecting out over the gully. As we continued to climb, it actually got hot, and I thought it was time to practice some climbing in the proper French technique, "au naturel." (See photo.) After all, if Dick Williams can do Shockley's Ceiling minus his robes, why can't North Gully be climbed in like manner?

The day we picked to climb up and traverse over to Mt. Adams was almost as perfect, but the wind was back with us, although only a mild 20 mph. We didn't have time to go all the way over to the summit of Adams, so we traversed around to the north side of the Mt. Washington summit. This is a side very rarely seen in the winter since the prevailing winds and weather comes in from the north and northwest. The rime ice on the rocks there was sculptured to a length of 2 feet with very minute detail of frost feathers that would break at a slight touch. It's truly amazing how they are formed so dynamically in such high winds that they break off only at a human touch. The climb on this side is quite different, due to the much heavier covering of rime ice, and I recommend it when time and weather allow.

We climbed Damnation Gully in interestingly lousy weather -- blowing mist, snow, and numerous powder sloughing mini-avalanches from above in the gully. Towards the top the ice was too shallow to get a good ice screw in, and finally I was able to get in a shaky horizontal piton into a nearby crack in the rock. The winds alternately blew snow up from below or blew great volumes of snow over the cornice at the top. I was frosted like a coconut macaroon and a bit leary of the next 30 feet of climbing which was up snow-covered rock. I finally solved the situation by front pointing up a band of frozen moss while using my ice hammer "piolet ancre" into some thick verglas on the rock wall to my right. Nervously approaching the top of this madness I ran out of rope just 15 feet from the cornice at the top. I was able to step left to a small rock platform and belay Maitland as he burst through the cornice to the top. Once out of the gully we carefully threaded our way through the fog and ice around to the top of the Escape Hatch for a delightful ride down -- a pillow-soft sitting glissade.

The winds that had filled the Escape Hatch with loose snow had also filled in South Gully and Odell's Gully, and they showed recent slide activity, so we postponed both Odell's and Pinnacle for some beautiful winter days next February.

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 for PATC Mountaineering Section members and \$2.50 per year for non-members. The additional dollar may be credited towards membership dues. New subscriptions and address changes should be sent to Business Manager, UP ROPE, etc.

Editorial, Continued

the Grand Canyon, and that the great strange rocks of Monument Valley will be obscured in gray haze.

Wilderness and outdoor fans, the point in the Four Corners case is precisely this: the anti-pollution laws in effect in Los Angeles and Phoenix prohibit the location of such power plants in those cities, so they must be placed in the "wilderness." DIG IT -- The new pattern is clear, this is just the first step -- now that the cities have thoroughly polluted themselves, they must move out into the unpopulated areas, the expendable wilderness.

Listen to the President of the Power Systems Co. of Westinghouse Electric Corp.: "Suggestions that we weight our rate structures to penalize large users of electric power, notions that we freeze levels of power consumption, recommendations that we begin to cut back on our use of electricity, all of these things, well-intentioned though some of them may be, are absolutely wrong and dangerous. To pull in the reins of our economic growth, (God forbid! Ed.) to push down our living standards, to paralyze our society, would be a sure guarantee of national disaster and the swift demise of the U.S. as a nation of any consequence whatever.

"Man has lived with pollution for millions of years" Does that sound familiar? Replace pollution with poverty, war, sickness -- it's a classic reactionary rationale. The inference is clear -- just learn to live with it, folks. He goes on to call the complaints of those who speak out against unbridled industry "the shrill cries of the few," mentions "fashionable statistics." He notes that electric power has been indicted on moral grounds because of its effects on the environment. But he concludes that "Much more serious, however, are the moral implications of not producing that electric power." I am afraid, as I read daily of the ecological disaster which surrounds us -- worldwide -- that I must flatly disagree.

Many conservation people believe that there is no such thing as "clean energy" and that the only possible final answer to curtail energy usage. Here's the Federal Power Commission Chairman on that issue: "I do not believe our national commitment to environmental preservation requires curtailment of power development since I am confident that our technological society, together with the establishment of the necessary Congressionally-directed institutional framework, will resolve this great issue of our time in the public interest."

I am sadly afraid that my confidence in our Congress, our institutions, and our technology has been steadily eroded. (Witness the Vietnam papers as to the government's concern for the public interest and opinion.) He went on to say that he favored increased energy outputs that meet imposed environmental standards. Unfortunately, the indications are that unlimited increases in energy output are totally incompatible with environmental protection -- our earth is a rather small planet and no one has noticed it growing lately. We have only so many natural resources. California is known for its beaches -- last month I saw them layered with oil and ooze. New York City is famous for its skyscrapers -- you can hardly see them now through the smog. Shall we remain silent while the clear air of the Southwest is despoiled?

If all this makes you sick at heart, write the following people and tell them how you feel: Sen. Henry Jackson, Chrm., Senate Interior Committee, Washington, DC 20510; Hon. Rogers B. Morton, Secy. of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240; Mr. John N. Nassikas, Chrmn., Fed. Power Commission, Washington, DC 20426; and Rep. Wayne Aspinall, Chrmn., House Interior Committee, Washington, DC 20515. Request further information and/or send money to Black Mesa Defense Fund, 107 Cienega St., Santa Fe, N.M. 87501; Central Clearing House, 338 E. D Santa Fe, N.M. 87501; Central Clearing House, 338 E. de Var-

gas, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501; Friends of the Earth, 8016-G Zuni, Albuquerque, N.M. 87108 or Sierra Club, 338 E. de Vargas, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501.

And for practical action in your home or office:

1. Use air conditioning as little as possible.
2. Get rid of electric knives, toothbrushes, can openers, etc. Use your arm muscles.
3. Watch consumption -- turn off radio and TV when you're not really paying attention.
4. Spurn aluminum cans -- it takes a tremendous amount of electricity to make aluminum.
5. In winter, put on more clothes and use less heat.
6. Complain to Pepco and Vepco about their promotion of more energy usage -- Pepco, 628-8800 x 965 or write 929 E St. NW, Box 2812, DC 20013; Vepco, OV3-0900, or write 907 W. Glebe Rd., Alexandria, Va. 22314.

And, most important, talk to your neighbors and colleagues at the office about the energy problem -- tell them about the grand plans for the Four Corners area -- chances are they may not even have heard of it. But they have heard of the Grand Canyon. Ask them if they want to give it up to pollution. Do you?

P. S. For those who were lucky enough to see Glen Canyon before it went under the water, and for those who have been enthralled by Eliot Porter's pictures of the canyon -- one of the power plants is planned for the Escalante Canyon area, which is an unspoiled canyon system similar to (although smaller than) Glen Canyon.

Belay Ledge

During 1971 the PATC Equipment Committee has received four complaints concerning the Alaska Sleeping Bag Co. of Beaverton, Oregon. In all of these complaints it was alleged that Alaska Sleeping Bag Co. cashed the senders' checks and failed to deliver the ordered equipment. In one case after numerous letters and telegrams a refund was obtained. Therefore, Alaska Sleeping Bag Co. is being dropped from the latest edition of the PATC Equipment Bulletin.

Steve Komito, the master boot repairman in Boulder, Colo., is moving his shop to Estes Park, Colo. this fall. He will not be taking any more appointments for repairs until October.

A "pull until failure" test was run on one new jumar ascender by Joe O'Laughlin at the Univ. of Colorado this spring. The results were that the toothed cam collapsed at 1600 lbs., and the metal at the bottom of the jumar broke at 5000 lbs. Please note however that these devices are cast metal, and they can get hairline fractures under impact. They should not be thrown or banged around.

Mountain Safety Research has reported that some 2 and 2½ inch bongs made by SMC show hydrogen embrittlement due to faulty plating. Mr. Jim Clark, the President of SMC has recalled all these bongs purchased before April 1971. They can be taken to your SMC dealer for replacement or refund. Mountain Safety Research has also noticed great differences in the hardness of the Nester "Superscrew" ice piton manufactured by Ed Nester. MSR also noted that the Nester piton tends to break with very little bending prior to fracture at the base of the threads. Ed Nester is aware of these problems and promised to make further tests of his pins, and will redesign his ice piton for a new batch to be available this winter.

A microbiologist at Georgetown University has found concentrations of coliform bacteria (human waste) in the Potomac River at Carderock in excess of 200 times the recommended safety level for water recreation. Ah, the beautiful Potomac...

CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

July 11	Boucher Rocks, Va.	Don Schaefer (521-5326)
July 14	Meeting, PATC Hq., 8:00 p.m.	
July 18	Great Falls, Va.	Dave Templeton (933-2174)
July 25	White Oak Canyon, Va.	Tink Peters (527-6272)
August 1	Carderock/Herzog Island	Tom McCrumm (527-6272)

Boucher Rocks, Va.

Beltway Exit 13, south on Route 193, first left on Balls Hill Road, left again onto Live Oak Drive. After crossing the Beltway, bear right and drive to dead end. Rocks are down dirt road and left, upriver about 200 feet.

Great Falls, Va.

Beltway exit onto Va. Route 193 north. Go approximately 6 miles and turn right at light (note sign). Go 1 mile to Park entrance (50¢) and park inside. Walk right (downriver) on the Nature Trail past the place where the old canal emptied into the river. The climbs start 100 feet from there and extend to the end of the gorge.

White Oak Canyon, Va.

Take I66 west to Gainesville and US 211 around Warrenton. Turn right at far end of "bypass business district" and continue on US 211 to Thornton Gap, the Park entrance. Turn south on Skyline Drive and go just past Skyland to White Oak Canyon parking area on left. Walk down trail one mile to cliffs just past first falls.

Carderock/Herzog Island

From the Beltway take the Carderock exit (15). Go 1 mile, bear right at sign, go left over overpass, turn right after passing under canal, and park in the last lot. The rocks are 100 yards past the comfort station. Herzog's Island is directly across from the Carderock Rocks. Wade! (The water should be fairly low.)

The Boucher Rocks and White Oak Canyon trips are exploratory trips. Boucher Rocks was a favorite area of many years ago, but the owners forbade climbing there until recently when the land came under the jurisdiction of the Fairfax County Park Authority. The climbing is very similar to other Potomac Gorge areas with the rare exception that it has quite a few vertical cracks for jamming technique. Over the years the vegetation has somewhat taken over, so please bring clippers and gloves and help clean up this favorite old area. There is an inside corner climb there that Bob Adams calls "the best climb in the Potomac Gorge."

White Oak Canyon has been utilized in the past as an ice climbing area, and last winter there were excellent ice formations for practice, some up to 50 feet high. Across the stream from the ice climbing area are cliffs up to 80 feet high.

Casualty Column

After many months in the hospital, Bob Adams is now home and back to work, with the aid of crutches. Bob has been greatly missed on club trips and we hope to see him back at Carderock before too long.

Maitland Sharpe, while coming down from a climb in Yosemite with Tom McCrumm and Steve Tandy, knocked a 1000 pound boulder loose which rolled a few feet, knocked him over and pinned his knee to a rock. After much effort he was extricated and helped down to the Valley hospital. He suffered some semi-permanent nerve damage to his leg which doctors in San Francisco say may take a year or more to heal. Until then he cannot climb, and must walk with a foot brace.

* * * * *

I am being driven forward
Into an unknown land.
The pass grows steeper,
The air colder and sharper.
A wind from my unknown goal
Stirs the strings
Of expectation.

Still the question:
Shall I ever get there?
There where life resounds,
A clear pure note
In the silence.

-- Dag Hammarskjöld

Up Rope

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