

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. 36

No. 8

AUG. 1971

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Piz Badile, N.E. Wall 11-14 Sept. 1964

by Roger Birch

We had dreamed of that wall a long time. Its history, all that was ever written about its early ascents, we had devoured. The account of the first ascent in the late thirties by the Italian master climber Cassin and his companions Copocito and Ratti. Re-read the accounts of their bitter struggle and the deaths from exhaustion of two fellow travelers on that ascent. The story of the second ascent, taking three days, by the great French guide Gaston Rebuffat and his companion Bernard Pierre, only added to the aura of this great wall. Piz Badile is the crowning glory of a beautiful cirque of peaks at the head of the Val Bondasca in the Bregaglia valley in Southeastern Switzerland, just a little way from the Italian border. My climbing partner of that summer, Mike Smith, and myself, with my two younger brothers Edd and Bill, drove overland to arrive at the village of Promontogno in the late afternoon of September 10th. The sight of the Badile from the village is shattering -- its giant snow tipped blade high in the sunlight -- its sight one of my great memories forever. We left the car farther up the Bondasca valley; from there the plan was to hike up the valley to Sciora hut. But the best laid plans etc.... darkness overcame the party, and at midnight, the packs bearing us down, we at last lay exhausted ... sleep came easy. That September dawn was unforgettable -- the giant walls of the Sciora group fleeing skyward -- the most magnificent sight I had ever seen. Badile, Northeast wall, God! Is that really the Badile? Its gaunt wall rising from the ice, 2,500 feet from base to summit; grey, flat and seemingly flawless.

After much discussion, and in fine weather, we reached the wall late in the afternoon of the 11th and climbed as two teams to the bivouac site at the foot of the first great diedre -- here we slept. The morning came soon, and with it, the sight of the great diedre bringing back memories of that classic photograph of Rebuffat leading it. We roped up, each action slow and sure; in the mind, apprehension of what the day would bring. Taking the lead I started up the diedre, its corner crack holding the verglas the night had sent. This pitch is about a hundred and twenty foot lead, two rusty pitons and several nuts of my own giving the needed mental reassurance. From here, the bit in our teeth, confidence growing with each pitch, the route now follows a line of steep slabs arching up to the left for about five rope lengths. Two long pitches lead up from here taking a series of overhanging grooves, the pegs in place in this section a godsend -- thoughts of Cassin in '37. At this point we rested and drank

a little of the water -- the little food we left for later. Minutes racing into hours passed, up slabs and walls, our only indication of height gained was a view of the giant west wall of Piz Cengelo to the east. Edd led what, still in my memory, was the hardest pitch -- a giant corner of great difficulty. There I gladly accepted a rope from above. Growing confidence eased itself onto us as the great pitches one by one, vanished below us. We reached the exit crack -- a series of cracks and narrow chimneys that reach skyward to join the north ridge just below the summit. It was here that it happened -- a weather change as vast in its spectrum as to defy imagination. In a matter of moments the weather tumbled round full circle, the late afternoon sun now gone, at first rain, hail, then snow in a density terrifying. The cracks above, only a short time ago the easy way to the summit, now fill as the moments go by. Verglas, ice, the snow filling the cracks as it fills the minds, ruthlessly. Darkness overcame us, not in the comfort of the Gianetti hut on the Italian side of the mountain, but 600 feet below the summit on its north wall. Decisions, decisions -- hell! Doesn't this only happen in books, sitting in the comfort of an armchair a thousand miles away. One thing was certain, we couldn't stay there exposed and open to the storm on that wall. We placed pegs, arranged the two 150's together and started off down the wall, fear and its realities a constant companion. Darkness, an overhand small protection, and a long cold night begins. I thought it was never to end, cold, God how cold. We talked, no one could sleep for three hours only to find that twenty-five minutes had passed. We think, and pray for the dawn. Dawn came slow, so slowly, the snow having stopped, the cold still with us, a swirling mist covering the wall. Only one way to go, down. Pitch after pitch, rappel after rappel, each operation a seeming age, slowly the wall passed beneath us. Oh how short are September days in the Alps. The food now gone, ice chunks are liquid, we managed to reach the first Cassin bivouac late in the afternoon. This next, made for half a man to lie, was our bed for the evening. Hammered to a dozen pitons, cramped, cold, wet ropes our pillow, the second night grinded slowly, moment by moment into tomorrow.

At first light we spent a seeming age fixing the abseil ropes. I look off from the ledge, out and into space, down and down, a safety rope a warm consolation, I am not alone. It doesn't work, this abseil supposed to bypass the two great grooves we had climbed on the way up, leaves me nowhere but in space.

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P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

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Hanging Around

Wolf Rock, May 16, 1971

Fred Kitchell, Trip Leader
Peter Gardiner

Chuck Sproull
John Hartman

May 16 started out a rainy day and only the most optimistic showed. We were rewarded by a dry afternoon and the improbable landscape of Wolf Rock -- a mound of shattered rock interrupting the forest. Veteran and ersatz leader Chuck Sproull picked out only the blankest faces and trickiest jam cracks for his novice wards to attempt. These featured retracting nubbins and cracks which were reluctant to release hand jams -- a member of the party almost became a permanent feature of one jam climb. Despite this, there was only one accident. Pete found that his hand had been nibbled at on one particularly difficult climb and was lowered a bandaid.

Caudy's Castle Rocks, W. Va.
May 22-23, 1971

Joan & Dave Templeton, Trip Leaders
Celine Soges
Doug Chandler
Duane Johnson
Members of the Walt Whitman High
School Climbing Club

Clayton Kerns & nephew
Phil Eddy
Fred Kitchell
Scott Key
Roger Birch

Avid readers of UP ROPE will recall that about this time last year it was reported by this writer that the swimming area in the Cacapon which the club has been wont to use at Caudy's Castle Rocks (hereinafter referred to as Caudy's) had been rendered inaccessible by the posting of No Trespassing signs by the owner of the land across which one must go to get to it. This owner, a Mr. Walter R. Duncan of Winchester, was contacted by letter and an offer was made that the Mountaineering Section keep his area cleared of litter in exchange for his permission for us to access his land. He was told, of course, of our fair treatment of his land in the past and of our traditional use of the swimming area. This weekend's trip was planned to include the activity of removing the litter from both Mr. Duncan's land and the camping area at Caudy's in addition to the usual one of climbing. No answer has been received as yet from Mr. Duncan, however, so cleaning up of his area was ruled out due to our not having his permission to access his land.

Joan and enroute Saturday morning picking up Celine at the 7-11 on the other side of Seven Corners on route 50. Celine lives with her family in McLean. She is becoming active in the PATC, having led a couple of hiking trips, and I

could see she wouldn't believe we hiked straight up until we had her on a climb. Terribly insular, these hikers. All during the weekend she kept insisting we should go for a hike. (Paging Bob Mole, a new splinter group is forming) However, in spite of her brainwashed state, she did do some practice climbs and shows good promise. As her father has climbed in Europe, I think we may gain a new member of the MS.

Just after the three of us had set up camp at Caudy's, Duane Johnson and Doug Chandler pulled in. Doug is doing a tour of duty at Naval Medical and Duane is just recently here with the Teamsters Union and is moving his family down from New Hampshire. Both have just started climbing with us.

Being unable to form teams for continuous climbs, we set up practice climbs on the east side of the rocks. We did both of the chimney cracks and Doug and I tried unsuccessfully to do a wicked face climb to the right of the leftmost crack. The crux involved a layback on fingertip holds at a point where one's arms were already swollen like balloons.

Meanwhile, back at the campsite, the Walt Whitman crew pulled in and we found them there on our return. As it developed, they also were there to delitter the area. I never did get it straight as to whether Clayton Kerns showed up by appointment or by chance, but show up he did, by gum, and in a pick-up truck which we soon had loaded a quarter full of rusty 20th century artifacts. After unloading most of this at the Old Forge, we were entertained by Clayton with a versatile spoon accompaniment to the guitar. Actually Clayton demonstrated his genius by using a fork and a spoon, two spoons being unattainable for some reason or other. Clayton left about midnight, fuller of bubbling spirits than when he arrived, and, as we learned the next day, scattering the remainder of his load of junk half the length of the entrance road. One assumes he left the truck gate down. No one panicked his spoon playing.

On Sunday, after cleaning up the road, we again set up the practice climbs and were soon joined by Phil, Fred, Scott, and Roger. In addition to the usual cracks, we set up two more, one near the corner and one on the face that looks toward the campsite. This last one is an interesting problem, as one is climbing an overhanging wall and the rest niches occur just as they are needed. Roger and I tackled the climb that Doug and I had worn ourselves out on the day before. While we were resting up and debating about making another attempt, Fred Kitchell, who must have played center for his basketball team, sort of ambled up the climb. He didn't have to use the layback hold. He could reach a foot above it and get a good hold. And he stood there and grinned while he did it.

Needless to say, all activity ceased shortly. We stopped at Winchester and tried the "all the fried chicken you can eat" special on our way back.

The swimming hole? Well, while we were sweltering in the sun, most of the population of West Virginia, parts of that of Virginia and Maryland, people from remote sections of Siberia, and the seven lost tribes of Israel blithely ignored Duncan's poster signs and went down and cooled them-

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.

selves in the Cacapon. Goodness is its own reward. We felt our goodness radiate in the sweltering heat while those damned sinners trespassed their way to perdition. We felt so righteously good we almost broke down and cried from the glory of it all.

WHERE IS THE STOKES LITTER?

For use in its future exercises, the Training Committee has the necessity of the Stokes litter which used to be resident in the basement of the club headquarters. Anyone possessing knowledge of its whereabouts, please contact Dave Templeton, 933-2174 or Harold Meyer, 248-5297.

ANOTHER ACCIDENT AT CARDEROCK

-- Dave Templeton

A young girl fell on rappel on Jan's Face at Carderock on the evening of July 22. She was using a mechanical rig -- a carabiner and a brake bar. She was riding a 7/16 inch Gold-line. This was attached to a tree at top by a series of hitched slings, web and rope, and a carabiner. She had two companions, one at the top to coach her and one at the bottom watching. It was her first time on rappel. She had not been given a safety belay. Some three feet from the top, she slipped, lost control and slid down the rest of the way still out of control. Her fall was slowed only by the friction inherent in the brake bar assembly. She suffered abrasions on the right side of her face, contusions about her right eye and a fractured right wrist. The Cabin John Rescue took her to Suburban Hospital. As of the 23rd, she was up and walking around.

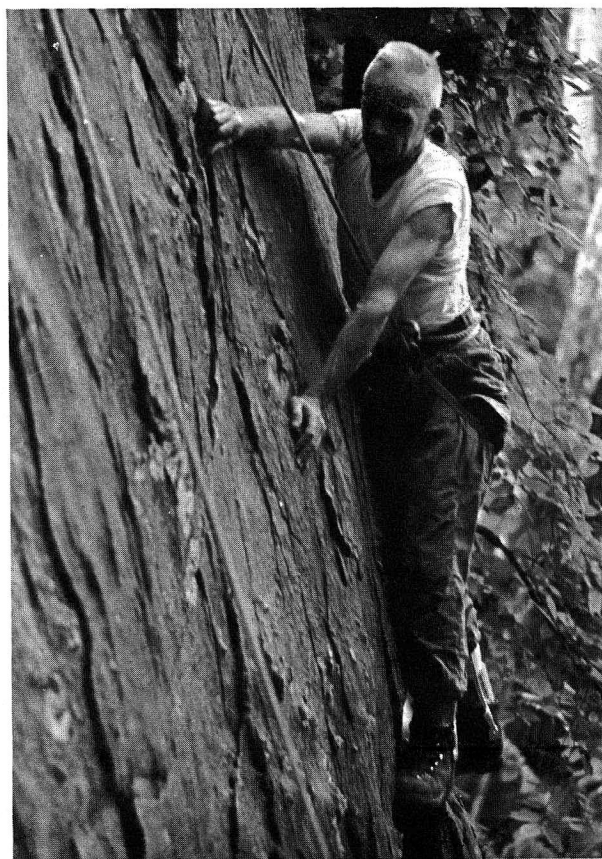
Joan, John Stanard and I were by Nubble Face when Joan heard the sirens of the rescue squad. On investigation, a Park Policeman told her a girl had fallen off the cliffs. After saying something to John and I, she went to see if she could be of any help. She found the girl lying on her back. Her arm had been placed in a splint. Her face was swollen about the right eye and was abraded. When I arrived at the scene of the accident, I found Joan and a young man at the bottom of Jan's. John was at the top inspecting the rigging. The young man appeared to be a relatively inexperienced climber. He was not aware that the fall could have been stopped from below by his throwing his weight into the rope. He had not been standing close enough in any event. His companion, whom I met later, has had mountaineering experience, having been trained by one of the local high school groups. Yet he was unaware that the fall could have been stopped from below. He agreed to the logic that a novice should be given a belay on their first several rappels and was sorry that he had not thought of such action earlier.

Experience is a hard and a cruel teacher. A girl's zest for climbing may have become inhibited by the trauma of an unnecessary accident. Three people out to have fun together on a lovely summer evening have a picture of horror to carry as a keepsake of their ignorance.

Who is at fault? Who can we hang? Shall we point fingers and spit? Or shall we note that we have no training schedule to serve either ourselves or the community at large at the present time. I have noted it for some time, and because of what happened that night, I called Terry Robinson and got myself placed in charge of the responsibility for seeing that some sort of training procedures are placed in effect for the future. You will hear more about it next meeting. Until then, inform those who are interested in either being trained or in helping to train others that I will, until further notice, be using the first Sunday of each month for such activity. Since the first Sunday in September is on the Labor Day weekend, we will use the second Sunday of that month instead.

Piz Badile, continued from page 1

The next moments were the most exhausting in my life, the prusiks sling bit poorly on the wet rope, my calls for more help from above rather negative. At the top of that rope I lay trying so hard to vomit -- there's nothing there. During the next hours I watched a boy grow to manhood. My brother Edd reversed the grooves, a superb effort, and seven hours later saw the four of us at the base. Seven hours, two hundred feet. It was straightforward now, about ten absiels placing us at five in the afternoon on the easy glacier. We had been up on that wall for seventy-one hours, yet as though hypnotized, our eyes lift back, and make a promise. We staggered down the Bondascotal, retrieving on the way the gear we had stashed. We reached the car about nine. A small pension in Promontogno, food, wine, and sleep, sleep, sleep. Two days later we left the valley for Como, the sun again shining, that spire laughing in the white high sunshine. One day I shall return; treat me with kindness.



Bob Adams at Carderock again --
one picture is worth a thousand words.

SUBSCRIBERS WHO ARE NOT PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION MEMBERS: please remember that the subscription rate has gone up to \$2.50 per year.

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

The Training Committee will have a training session at Club headquarters at 8:00 on August 18. The session will be held on the second floor. Training slides will be shown. All beginning climbers are urged to attend.

CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

Date	Place	Leader
Aug. 7-8	Seneca, W. Va.	Bill Thomas (536-7948)
Aug. 14-15	Bull Run, Va.	Fred Kitchell (498-7493)
Aug. 22	Potomac Gorge	Don Schaefer (521-5326)
Aug. 28-29	Shawangunks, N.Y.	Tink Peters (527-6272)
Sept. 4, 5, 6	Seneca, W. Va./ Eagle Rock, W.Va.	Sallie Greenwood (683-5091)
Sept. 12	Little Stony Man, Va.	Al Goldberg (593-8124)

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. (The leader's main responsibility is to see that no one kills himself unnecessarily. Also, he is to see that newcomers are introduced around and taught some of the basics of climbing; check out the rigging of top-roped climbs, and last, but far from least, to write up an exciting, lucid description of the trip's highlights.) If directions to climbing areas need revision, please note the necessary changes and send them to Editor, UP ROPE, 1718 N St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Seneca/Eagle Rock, W. Va.

From beltway take I66 to Gainesville and bear right onto Va. 55 to Moorefield, W. Va. Turn left on U.S. 220 to Petersburg, where you turn right onto W. Va. 4& 28. Go 22 miles to Mouth of Seneca. Or, for Eagle Rock, continue on 220 past Petersburg for 16 miles. Turn right on paved road to the rocks and campground (approximately 5 miles). The campground is about 2 miles from the Rock.

Bull Run, Va.

From the Beltway take I66 west to Gainesville. Bear right onto Va. 55. About a third of a mile past the junction with U.S. 15, bear right (note Skyline Caverns sign) onto a secondary road. In about 3 miles, turn left at a T-intersection (Antioch) where the road becomes dirt. The road becomes paved again at the county line (there's a sign). Shortly

thereafter, pass Col. Hugh Socks' (Ret.) house and park at the base of a steep jeep road on the left. Hike up the jeep road into an old quarry. Just before reaching an old steam shovel, pick up a white-blazed trail which runs along the right side of the quarry. Just before paralleling a second old steam shovel, the trail heads right into the woods. The rocks are about a mile up the trail 200 years past a good view partially blocked by a 10' high boulder.

Potomac Gorge

Call trip leader if you want to go. It will be a different trip!

Shawangunks, N.Y.

North on the Beltway to Colesville exit, Rt. 29 N to 70N East, to the Baltimore Beltway (695). Go left on 695 toward Towson, and at Exit 24, go west on Interstate 83, the Timonium-York exit. In exactly 70 miles take Rt. 81 to Allentown. (Do not take 78N to Allentown) 86 miles later (1 hr, 17 min.) turn onto Rt. 80, the Stroudsburg-Bloomsbury exit. Drive 46 miles to 209 N. (Note: 80 and 209 join at Stroudsburg.) Avoid 209 S and 209 Business, which peel off to the left. Take Exit 52, to Milford, exactly 1 hr. later. 37 miles from there, turn onto the new Rt. 84 and drive 40 miles to the last exit, Exit 5. Turn left onto 208 N to New Paltz. After 14 miles turn left onto 44-55 and wind your way about 7 miles to the Brauhaus "T" intersection and continue past the hairpin turn about a mile, to Trapp Road. Turn right and go about one mile, crossing two bridges, to poorly-marked Coxing Camp, on the right after the second bridge. This route takes 5 hrs, 40 min. from Columbia, Md. to Coxing Camp.

Little Stony Man, Va.

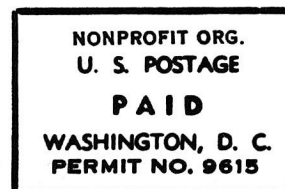
From the Beltway take I66 west to Gainesville and U.S. 211 around Warrenton. Continue on 211 to Thornton Gap. Turn south onto Skyline Drive and go 7.6 miles to the Little Stony Man parking lot. Hike 0.6 miles on the Appalachian Trail to the cliffs (don't turn left where the sign says 0.1 miles to Little Stony Man).

A TEASER!!!

Next month: a spine-tingling thriller guaranteed to make your hair stand on end! Don't miss it!

Up Rope

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DATED MATTER