



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

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### YOSEMITE TALES

by Tom Evans

YOSEMITE, MAY 1972 -- Norris left in mid-April, but he drives 35 mph so I could leave a week later and be there three days before he arrived. Lyon called, so I waited. Miracle of miracles, Lyon shows up and we head west. We arrive late at night, under a full moon. Pat Milligan is already there. We start well enough, climbing every day, helping Lyon along, trying to teach him three years' climbing in a week! Norris shows up with a friend and the weather holds. Pat and I go up on the West face of the Leaning Tower (grade V 5.7 A-4). Ten pitches, the wall overhangs at 118° for 1,000 ft. I've heard all the stories - the hauling bag hangs 30' out from the wall on every pitch - etc. etc. Pat's first wall climb. Anxiety builds as we start the climb. Three pitches up the "Warren Harding Memorial Bolt Ladder," we bomb them. The angle is so steep our minds compensate for it and thus it seems just slightly overhanging. Lulled by three fun pitches I move off on #4. Peering into the sun I can see some rotten Bashie slings hanging down from a thin, rotten seam. The next two hours find me tapping knifeblade stacks in behind minute flakes that can't possibly hold but do. Two, three, four bad pins then a rotten Bashie, or perhaps a bolt, bent down and pulling out. I tie it off too! Nervous! Long pitch, rope drag, that last pin I just hit and hit, it will never come out. Guano Ledge. We will bivvy 30' left on a fine flat ledge. We decide to fix two pitches so we will only have four tomorrow. As the warm afternoon progresses Pat goes down, then back up right, on a long, spectacular aid traverse. Pat fights his way along, each pin a personal hell of anxiety and doubt. I follow the strenuous pitch in fading light. Attitudes have changed, we hate this climb, when will it ease?

I join Pat's sling belay and stare into the teeth of the next lead. Forty feet of unprotected 5.7 on bad rock up to a curving bolt ladder. I complain bitterly, death gripping every hold. Once on the bolts, confidence returned - "it's in the bag, man." We fix the rope and rappel to the bivvy ledge. We rest, eat. Mostly we sit, each trying to piece together a battered ego. Warm night.

Morning finds us sleeping late. We eat then go back up the fixed rope. Two pitches go well. I belay in slings under the notorious "Evil Tree" that clings to a huge, triangular ceiling. Pat climbs over the ceiling and up the

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